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Grandmothers' Leadership Roles as Reflected in the Lives of High-Achieving Women: A Qualitative Study of the Impact of Grandmothers on Granddaughters During Their Formative Years

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GRANDMOTHERS' LEADERSHIP ROLES AS REFLECTED IN THE LIVES OF
HIGH-ACHIEVING WOMEN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF
GRANDMOTHERS ON GRANDDAUGHTERS DURING THEIR FORMATIVE YEARS

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GRANDMOTHERS' LEADERSHIP ROLES AS REFLECTED IN THE LIVES OF
HIGH-ACHIEVING WOMEN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF
GRANDMOTHERS ON GRANDDAUGHTERS DURING THEIR FORMATIVE YEARS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to document and recognize the role of grandmothers as leaders, role models, and mentors who can positively influence the lives of their granddaughters.

Grandmothers' roles are not typically associated with leadership, and this phenomenon of presenting grandmothers as effective leaders will fill a void and add to the canon of leadership literature. The use of phenomenological study, which describes the lived experience (Husserl, 1970), as well as transformative leadership and feminist theory perspectives will be pivotal to this study. Due to the dearth of data on grandmothers' leadership roles, this phenomenological study will "give voice" to grandmothers whose lives have positively impacted their granddaughters, but it will avoid revisionist ideals; will provide granddaughters with the opportunity to acknowledge "gifts" of leadership provided by their grandmothers as their role models and their mentors; will aid in understanding the importance of grandmothers in the transmission of culture and of family values; and, as an international study, will explore and provide further understanding within the global community. This dissertation is available in open-access at OhioLink ETD Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd and AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, <http://aura.antioch.edu/>

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Introduction

Overview of Context

The notion of grandmothers being identified or described as leaders is revolutionary. For the first time, unheralded grandmothers across the globe have created a movement that challenges political, economic, and social changes on behalf of their grandchildren.

Grandmothers are challenging the status quo and redefining what leadership looks like. These women have assumed various leadership roles and are demonstrating leadership qualities as they negotiate for a better world. Grandmothers' roles within the family and community are usually not synonymous with leadership (Francese, 2009). The Grandmother Movement, however, according to Gianturco (2012), is encouraging grandmothers all over the world to become activists and advocates as they bring their diverse leadership talents, skills, and many years of experience to the movement. They are influencing and teaching important lessons to their granddaughters.

Based on a U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2007 survey, there are over 70 million grandparents in the United States; of them, more than half are grandmothers, based on the natural male-to-female gender ratio. This population has emerged as a powerful, influential, yet underestimated force. Francese (2009) estimated that, as a group, grandparents spent 2 trillion dollars in the year 2007, of which 52 billion dollars were spent on grandchildren. Projections by the U.S. Census Bureau and 2004 Survey of Income and Program estimated that by the year 2015, 59% of grandparents in the United States will have birthdates between 1946 and 1964, the dates marking the cohort of the boomer generation. Baby boomers, the largest educated group to date, will continue to drive economic, educational, political, and social directives as their numbers grow, while influencing all aspects of the society. As grandparents, they head 37% of

U.S. households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004), giving them greater opportunity to influence the developmental stages of their grandchildren (Block, 2000).

Most studies on leadership focus on adulthood and may look at parents as leaders but never at grandmothers. Rost (1991) noted that the modern concept of leadership is that of an influencing relationship, resulting in changes that reflect a shared commitment, while Hollander (1978) defined leadership as a progression of influence between those who lead and those who follow. Rost's 221 examinations of definitions of leaders and leadership, in every instance except one, revealed the use of masculine terms, such as "statesmanship" and "commander" and "unifying men" (p. 52). This absence in the leadership narrative of the female gender, and of grandmothers' contributions in particular, has created a gap in the canon. Fischer (1998) noted that "the stereotyping of old people may be the last prejudice publicly countenanced in American life" (p. 7). This prejudice extends to how leadership roles are identified and to who are considered to be leaders.

Rost (1991) referenced this by denouncing the relevance of dyadic relationships (such as parent-child, teacher-child, and grandmother-granddaughter), stating that "leadership scholars and practitioners would do well to exclude dyadic relationships from their concepts of leadership" (p. 110). For these and other reasons to be explained, I have chosen to examine the grandmother-granddaughter relationship. The influence of the family on socialization and development, including potential leadership development of children, is widely documented. Freud's psychodynamic theory and Jung's analytical theory of collective unconsciousness, Adler's compensatory motivation, Fromm's social psychology and Erickson's psychosocial stages all provide theoretical background for family and child development (Mischel, 1993). This research provides a platform for exploring the roles of grandmothers and their influence on their

granddaughters. Nolte and Harris (1998) provided a framework and a perspective on the potential for developing and nurturing children into leaders. This research asks: “How have grandmothers’ interactions and/or relationships with their granddaughters during the formative years influenced the leadership potential and success of their adult granddaughters?”

Grandmothers are like sand on the seashores! They are everywhere! They come in all sizes, forms, classes, educational levels, and ethnicities. They are called by numerous names based on nationality and ethnicity: BeBe, G-Ma, G-Mom, Mia, MayMay, Gigi, Nanny, Nana, Mom-Mom, Grannie, and Big Momo; and in as many languages and dialects:

Chinese: NaiNai

Japanese: Oba-chan

French: Grandmere

Portuguese: VoVo

German: Oma

Polish: Babcia

Greek: YaYa

Russian: Bubushaka

Hawaiian: Tutu

Spanish: Abuela

Italian: Nonna

Yiddish: Bubbe

just to give a sampling. There are several resources, including websites and foundations, devoted to grandparents and the roles they play in the lives of their grandchildren and in society. These resources include prominent and influential organizations in North America, such as The Stephen Lewis Foundation and its Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), and The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Grandmothers are typically unsung heroes, helping to heal, protect, and educate the world in order that children can live healthy and happy lives. Gianturco (2012) noted that many grandmothers are changing the world by using their resources and authority to create a better society for children. She listed

global examples of these unheralded elders whose movement is helping to reshape the world. For example:

Grandmothers in Canada, Swaziland and South Africa collaborate to care for AIDS orphans . . . in Senegal convince communities to abandon female genital mutilation . . . in India become solar engineers and bring light to their villages . . . in Peru, Thailand and Laos sustain weaving traditions . . . in Argentina teach children to love books and reading . . . in Ireland, teach children to sow seeds and cook with fresh herbs . . . Argentine grandmothers continue their 40 year search for kidnapped grandchildren . . . in the Philippines seek justice for sex slavery during World War II . . . in Guatemala operate a parenting hotline . . . in the Middle East, Israeli grandmothers monitor checkpoints to prevent abuse . . . in the UAE start popular television shows; and indigenous grandmothers from thirteen countries conduct healing rituals to bring peace to the world. (Gianturco, 2012, book jacket)

The Problem and the Need for the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to document, describe, and acknowledge grandmothers whose leadership roles influenced the lives of their granddaughters. Using the lens of their adult granddaughters, the essential question is: “How have grandmothers’ interactions and/or relationships with their granddaughters during the formative years influenced the leadership potentials and success of the adult granddaughters?”

The problem presented is that the leadership potential and value of grandmothers as a group have been unrecognized and unidentified, and therefore not researched. In an effort to uncover how gender and societal sexism have contributed to this gap, this study employs a feminist perspective to examine the narratives of adult granddaughters who attribute their successes to the leadership of their grandmothers. Patriarchal society has limited, obscured, and diminished the work and contributions of women. Pervasive sexism and gender stereotypes about women have negatively affected leadership growth, recognition, and potentials. Therefore, I use a feminist perspective to study the grandmother-granddaughter dyadic relationship.

For this study, an intergenerational transmission framework—a tradition in which the older generation influences the developmental stages of the younger generation—is employed. Empirical research on intergenerational transmission and family kin relationships includes that of Kennedy (1992), Kivett (1996), and Roberto and Stroes (1992), who explored intergenerational relationships and noted that while the quality of intergenerational relationships depends on several variables, the grandmother-granddaughter relationship appeared to be the closest grandparent-grandchild relationship. Weiss (1974) used an intergenerational theoretical framework that identified values such as attachment, social integration, opportunity for nurturance, reassurance of worth, sense of reliable alliance, and obtaining of guidance as important principles to use for the exploration of grandmother-granddaughter relationships.

Grandparents have occupied and played many roles in society; however, it is grandmothers' various roles that have been paramount in the stories of their helping, mentoring, parenting, protecting, and leading their grandchildren to better lives (Gianturco, 2012). It is my intention to focus on the exceptional gifts of grandmothers to their granddaughters. The literature contains many stories of grandmothers who dramatically changed the course of history for their grandchildren by stepping into uncharted territories and rescuing grandchildren who would have been otherwise left to die or to become social outcasts or “dregs” of society.

Following are some examples of grandmothers' activities in the lives of their grandchildren. These stories are presented in *Grandmother Power: A Global Phenomenon* (Gianturco, 2012).

- Eleonore, 83, and Donna, 57, retired nurses with a total of six grandchildren and two great-grands, spend many hours each week with HIV/AIDS grandchildren.

- JoAnne, 62, helped raise \$87,000 for a children's village in South Africa. She noted, "It turned out that everything I've ever done prepared me for what I do" (p. 17). She had never done public speaking or fundraising before.
- Siphwiwe, 51, has three grandchildren and has adopted an additional five grandchildren whose parents were sick, dead, or unable to care for them. An activist in Swaziland, she administered the program to provide condoms and medications for HIV/AIDS patients.
- In Peru, Nilda is helping sustain the native tradition of weaving. She taught her granddaughter the art, which she had learned from her grandmother. This tradition is generational, passing from grandmothers to granddaughters, providing each generation of women with the skills to be economically self-sufficient.
- In Guatemala, Fluvia, grandmother of five, advocates for children. She manages the Grandmothers' Hotline, which fights against child pornography video on cell phones.

Many esteemed members of different societies have given homage to their grandmothers, including Don Gold and Maya Angelou. Gold (2007) so loved and admired his grandmother that he was inspired to create a project in which he interviewed the elderly and published the book *Until the Singing Stops: A Celebration of Life and Old Age in America*. He noted that his grandmother's memory provided him with the drive to connect with the elderly and record their stories. Angelou (1969) in her autobiographical book, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, described her early childhood years of being raised by her grandmother and the positive impact of her grandmother on her life.

Grandmothers are people endowed with unique qualities. These qualities have enabled women to engage in supportive roles as guardians and parents, even in their old age. The act of

teaching, parenting, educating, and living with children, according to Van Manen (1990), is pedagogical, thus providing the venue for exchange of clear thoughts and information within relationships. A pedagogical act is one of leadership, and Van Manen further noted that this act can emancipate, guiding a child from childhood to adulthood.

Several organizations and groups provide support to grandmothers who have taken on the roles of guardians, kinsfolk, and adopted parents. Previously noted in North America are two well-known privately owned organizations: The Annie E. Casey Foundation in the United States, the largest philanthropic organization dedicated to improving the welfare of children and families; and The Stephen Lewis Foundation in Canada. Other groups include the Administration on Aging (an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, Generations United, Grandparents Family Connections, Edgewood's Kinship Support Network, the GrandFamilies House, and The Brookdale Foundation's Relatives as Parents Program.

While it is impossible to accurately document the number of grandchildren living in the care of their grandparents, The Annie E. Casey Foundation's data fact sheet (2008) noted that millions of children are living with their grandparents. It is also impossible to discern how many of these millions of children are in the care of grandmothers as primary guardians, because not all of this information is verified or documented in the census records; however, one can infer that there are more grandmothers caring for grandchildren than grandfathers. There are varied reasons why grandmothers are caring for their grandchildren. By providing essential care when the parents are incapable of or are refusing to do so, many grandmothers enrich the lives of children and provide society with myriad options on how to ensure the welfare of the youth. Grandmothers help raise grandchildren who succeed; they become substitute parents when the

parents are unable to meet the essential needs of their children—whether due to incarceration, mental or physical illness (including HIV/AIDS), death, drug abuse, or abandonment, or due to having been found guilty of neglecting or abusing their children (mental, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse), and also in cases of extreme poverty.

I posit that grandmothers are choosing to re-enter the parenting stage with their grandchildren for additional reasons, such as being given a second chance to help raise children when they as adults are more stable and mature; because they had missed out or were absent in raising their own children; because they experience guilt in not being good parents the first time around; because they have financial independence and the ability to support their grandchildren; and as empty nesters, because they have the space and time to commit to their grandchildren. So, for whatever the reasons grandparents choose to help raise grandchildren—whether philanthropic, humanistic, intrinsic, or egocentric—this arrangement can be a successful venture with a win-win result. A recent study of Iowa families looked at the impact of grandmothers on their grandchildren (Barnett, Scaramella, Neppel, Ontai, & Conger, 2010) and discovered that grandmothers' interaction with grandchildren can help avoid social and emotional problems. The grandmothers' care and attention to the needs of the grandchildren can alleviate and protect the children from harsh parenting, thus decreasing defiance in the child. Grandmothers' visions, unique contributions, and often different family style can help transform how grandchildren are raised outside of the nuclear family structure and foster care. Grandmothers as leaders can position grandchildren to achieve success.

Statement of Purpose and Rationale for the Study

At this stage in the research, the grandmother-granddaughter dyad is generally defined as maternal or paternal grandmothers whose leadership qualities have implicitly or explicitly

impacted positively the success of their adult granddaughters. Given the multiplicity of grandmother-granddaughter relationships, what are the roles or indicators for successful transmission of leadership values between grandmothers and granddaughters? Because of the lack of empirical research, a phenomenological approach dedicated to the feminist perspective, and to the understanding of women's lived experiences, is appropriate for investigating this question (Heinrich, 1995). This dissertation presents a case study of a diverse set of international participants, all of whom are adult granddaughters.

This research provides a platform for exploring the roles of grandparents and their positive impact on the developmental stages of their grandchildren. Nolte and Harris (1998) provide a framework and a perspective on the potential for developing and nurturing children into leaders. The phenomenological framework highlights the experiences of women who, through their own definitions, consider themselves successful leaders in their adult lives; the framework enriches the study as the lives of grandparents are examined through the eyes of their granddaughters. Significant to this study are the women's reflections on how their grandmothers' influences prepared them for life. The research incorporates videotaping interviews, and for those who do not wish to be videotaped, audiotaping. In a few cases, due to the global composition of the participants, the women were sent questions via e-mail.

Research Approach and Design

The most appropriate approach for this proposed phenomenological study is in-depth interviews. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling. I also used snowball sampling, in which the identified participants who know other possible candidates referred and introduced them to me, thus providing information-rich cases (Creswell, 1998). I conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which were audio- and videotaped. The tapes later were transcribed.

In a semi-structured interview, the order of asking the questions can vary, enabling flexibility as the interviewer can follow a new lead or introduce a new topic based on how the session is progressing. Participants received written copies of the questions beforehand to allow for and enhance memory recall and to provide them the opportunity to ask clarifying questions before the taping. To provide optimal comfort and results, both researcher and participant decided the location and the physical site. Prior to the selected interview date, all participants received the consent form that informed the interviewees of the format as well as the duration, the purpose of the study, and how the gathered information will be used. During the interview, I practiced good listening skills and also took notes, allowing for emotional breaks if necessary.

The grandmother-granddaughter conceptual framework emerged as a result of engagement with successful women leaders who prefaced their speeches with “had it not been for my grandmother.” Upon further examination of the limited literature on women leaders, I found that there was a gap or oversight that needed to be filled, while keeping in mind Sacks’s (2013) caution that

fear is the uneasy knowledge of the unregulated power that storytellers wield in shaping our conceptions of truth. The voices of the past can’t speak for themselves and must rely on the artists of the future to honor them. The past is a dangerous place to visit and not for the faint of heart. (p. C6)

I hope to help create a forum for understanding and dialogue, so that the voices of the past can speak and be heard again.

In order to explore the grandmother-granddaughter relationship, I drew on feminist theory as well as on theories of transformational and servant leadership. Feminism, according to hooks (2000) is the movement to end women’s oppression. More comprehensive definitions of the terms *feminist perspective* and *feminist theory*, according to Johnson and Jones (1998), are as follows:

Feminist theory seeks to analyze the conditions which shape women's lives and to explore the cultural understandings of what it means to be a woman. It was initially guided by the political aims of the Women's Movement—the need to understand women's subordination and our exclusion from, or marginalization within, a variety of cultural and social arenas. Feminists refuse to believe inequalities between women and men are natural and inevitable and insist that they should be questioned. . . . Thinking as a feminist involves challenging much of what has counted as “knowledge” . . . women have often been the objects of knowledge rather than the producers of it. (p. 1)

Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical discourse.

Feminist approach can be used interchangeably with the term *feminist perspective*. At the core of the feminist perspective as well as of feminist theory is gender inequality. Gender inequality, according to hooks (2000), is the prejudicial actions or views of an individual or group, based on physical and sexual characteristics created by society.

Studies by Crosnoe and Elder (2002), Dunifon and Kowaleski-Jones (2007), Neikrug (2000), and Bengtson (2001) look at the roles of grandparents and the importance of multigenerational bonds and relationships. My study focused on the specific relationships between grandmothers and granddaughters. Employing a feminist approach in this research puts the voices of women at the center of the study, framing the conversation and giving a voice to women who may have been silenced or invisible in previous studies. Olesen (1994) noted that third-wave feminist research examines women's diverse situations, helping frame assumptions and perspectives. Feminist-centered research brings various women's issues to the forefront:

The overt ideological goal of feminist research in human sciences is to correct both the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position. (Lather, 1991, p. 71)

A feminist perspective provided meaning to voice: giving identity, giving voice, developing voice, reclaiming voice, affirming the power of voice. There is a need to learn more about the experiences of granddaughters. This study gave them the opportunity to share their stories and to

explain how their leadership abilities were developed and why they ascribe their successes to their relationships with their grandmothers.

Positioning: Researcher's Perspective

As I reflected on my own childhood, I realized the important role that both sets of grandparents have played in my life. Several of my classmates and playmates in elementary and high school have had similar experiences with their grandparents. With Jamaica and other islands of the Caribbean seeking independence from England, many children in the 1960s were left behind with their grandparents when their parents left for Britain and Canada to work and seek a better life for their families. Grandparents were asked to help raise the children until the parents could unite the family again. I was one of those children. In my early years, I was loved and nurtured by both sets of grandparents, and as I continue my path of further education, I have come to understand that it does take a village to raise a child. I have since witnessed the positive influence of other grandparents on the lives of their grandchildren, influence that has been revealed as I interact with staff and undergraduate student leaders in my position as an administrator at a small liberal arts college in central Pennsylvania.

I heard stories of how granddad and grandmom had influenced students' lives. Those stories brought back memories for me. As I began to explore areas for my doctoral dissertation, I felt compelled to honor a group of people who have helped to make the world a better place by investing in the lives of their grandchildren. I want to tell the stories of grandmothers and granddaughters and how these relationships evolved. I want to give a voice to women leaders as well as to their often invisible, silent, and forgotten leaders and mentors—their grandmothers.

My life epitomizes change, and my grandmothers instilled in me the passion to commit to and to strive for success. Therefore, my personal and professional life has been in constant

change, evolving each year, while I am engaged in learning and practicing leadership skills. I have spent the past 14 years in school pursuing an education, simultaneously managing my household and my jobs, carrying out three major research projects, presenting at and co-convening conferences, leading several experiential learning trips, annually directing a summer camp for local children, and balancing my professional, social, and spiritual life. As the first child of the first born on both my mother's and father's sides, I dubbed myself first daughter, first love, first joy, and first to attend college, and now: first to seek a doctorate degree. I have experienced firsthand the influence of grandmothers on life—not only on my life, for I have also seen influences on the lives of others, including dozens of cousins, extended family members, and even strangers.

The concept of grandparents as leaders, and as mentors of future leaders, is not a new concept; however, their influence on future leaders—that is, their grandchildren—is just now being studied (Brown, 2003). Effective leadership encourages change, is challenged by change, and works with the nuances that are a part of change, because change is inevitable (Bornstein, 2007).

My maternal grandmother played a pivotal role in helping shape who I am today. Under her care I learned important life lessons that prepared me for life in Jamaica and later abroad. For example, an important concept is that of being a good steward of one's resources. My grandmother's statements included "waste not, want not," "it is not how much you make, but what you do with what you have," "save for Mr. Rainy Day" (I would now say "save for a rainy day"), and "give some to those in need." Education was also important, and so I was encouraged to be the best and do my best "because no one can take your education away from you!"

Through observations and conversations with an internationally and ethnically diverse group of women, I have concluded that their relationships with their grandmothers during their formative years had positively influenced their success as adults. These women acknowledge their grandmothers' leadership ethics that they had observed, experienced, and practiced, as directly influencing who they are today.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The review of literature for this study provided information allowing readers to understand and gain knowledge concerning the importance of gender and its effect on leadership narratives. In addition, the review also examined the feminist perspective on leadership through the lenses and voices of women and of supporters of gender equality. An expository review examined historical reviews of leadership in general (i.e., reviews already accepted as part of the canon), as well as emergent feminist, gender-based information that challenges historical concepts and puts forth new ideas that support how the inclusion of women in the discourse benefits not only women, in particular, but society as a whole. First, I examined *Formal Historical Leadership*; second, I examined *Women and Leadership*; third, *Family Leadership*; fourth, *Transferable Family Leadership Skills*; and fifth, *Grandmother-Granddaughter Influence*.

Leadership is a process in which a person who is perceived as a leader has the ability to influence or control others for the accomplishment of a projected task or set of goals (Chemers, 1997). The literature on leadership abounds with impressive descriptions, theories, ideas, ethics, and philosophies of those who may be defined as leaders and of various paths to leadership. Much of the early research literature on leadership was penned by renowned scholars (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Hollander, 1978; Jago, 1982). Leaders and leadership were formerly considered as aligned with power, privilege, elite status, education, and physical and mental attributes, and therefore were strongly associated with men. Some women whose roles in society definitively designated them as leaders found that they were not acknowledged or recognized as such, because power and recognition would ultimately come from their male counterparts.

Women have historically been underrepresented in leadership roles and continue to experience obstacles on the leadership path, due to factors such as societal norms, gender, and stereotypes, but primarily because of the disproportionate distribution of domestic and childrearing duties (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). The need for women's presence in leadership positions is significant in helping shape and change people's perceptions concerning how women are seen and concerning their roles in society. The role of grandmothers as influencers empowering and bequeathing leadership values to their granddaughters is worthy of research.

Formal Historical Leadership

Leaders, leadership, leadership roles, leadership models, and leadership theories have been fully discussed, researched, analyzed, theorized, and documented throughout the decades. So what is leadership? Burns (1978) analyzed leadership and provided a framework for understanding the process. He popularized the concept of "transformational" leadership into the literature and discussed the essence of what it means to be a leader. Leaders and followers are interdependent, and each provides value to the other; they have a symbiotic relationship (Burns, 1978; Heller, 1982; Hollander, 1992; Jago, 1982; and Rost, 1991).

Different schools of thought on leadership have emerged over the years, as leadership has been researched, documented and defined in many ways (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Heller, 1982; Rost, 1991). But a question remains: Are leaders developed, born, or created? Male and female are biological and social entities influenced both by their environments and by hereditary factors. Genes dictate a person's gender and other physical attributes, while psychological characteristics such as intelligence also may be determined by various genes. "Nature versus nurture" continues to drive the debate on the social and psychological influences that affect personality. According

to Plomin (1990), “Behavior genetic data provide the best available evidence for the importance of non-genetic factors in the etiology of individual differences in personality” (p. 225).

Leadership Trait Perspective

Supporters of the trait theory include the following researchers: Bass, 1990; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Bryman, 1992; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Lord, de Vader, and Alliger, 1986; Nadler and Trushman, 1989; and Zaleznik, 1977.

According to another supporter, Stogdill (1948, 1974), the following traits are positively associated with leadership:

- drive for responsibility and task completion,
- vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals,
- venturesomeness and originality in problem solving,
- drive to exercise initiative in social situations,
- self-confidence and sense of personal identity,
- willingness to accept consequences of decisions and actions,
- readiness to absorb interpersonal stress,
- willingness to tolerate frustration and delay,
- ability to influence other people’s behavior, and
- capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand.

Some traits were identified as leadership traits; as such, these perspectives were used as markers to identify individuals possessing qualifying qualities—such as height, extroversion, and speech fluency—as destined to become leaders. The trait perspective on leadership has been studied since the early 20th century, which saw the emerging of the “great man” theory (Bass, 1990; Jago, 1982). The great man theory fueled research that examined the lives of men who

were perceived to be great leaders, such as Gandhi, Lincoln and Napoleon. However, Stogdill (1948) challenged the assumptions of the great-man theory and declared that there was no consistent set of traits to separate leaders from followers. Mann (1959) joined in the traits discourse and reported his findings on personality and leadership; he identified leadership traits as intelligence, masculinity adjustment, dominance, extraversion, and conservatism; yet, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) contended and argued strongly that people can be born with, or can learn, leadership traits, which they identified as drive, desire to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of business. They affirmed their belief that “it is unequivocally clear that leaders are not like other people” (p. 59).

Northouse (2007) pointed out other approaches to leadership, for example the skills approach, the style approach, and the situational approach. He argued that five major leadership traits are intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability: Intelligence is a person’s ability to reason, one’s self-awareness, one’s ability to process abstract thoughts, and one’s mental agility. Self-confidence is developed through acquired skills and competencies. Determination consists of the ability and drive to complete tasks and is associated with initiative and persistence. Integrity is demonstrated in the qualities of honesty, trustworthiness, and dependability, as reflected in character and ethics. Sociability is the person’s inclination to seek out and build relationships, using interpersonal skills, tact, and diplomacy.

The above information on leadership traits is by no means exhaustive. For example, emotional intelligence, identified as a leadership trait, emerged in the 1990s and has been studied and debated. Early practitioners and researchers of emotional intelligence included Caruso and Wolfe, 2004; Goleman, 1995; Mayer and Salovey, 1995, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso, 2000. The last-named researchers, who developed a test to measure mental abilities such as

perceiving and managing emotions, do not support emotional intelligence as a strong indicator of leadership potential, while Goleman's (1995) broader approach contended that persons with strong emotional intelligence will be more effective leaders.

Trait perspective focuses on the leader (leader-centered perspective) and therefore has several strengths associated with it. Leaders are perceived as gifted and special people.

Women and Leadership

Women have more or less been left out of the discourse on leadership as research and data were identified more frequently with men. Expanded discourse that includes both gender and leadership has generated the interest of researchers who have argued on the differences between male and female leadership (Book, 2000). The dialogue has ranged from women's inferiority (Hennig & Jardim, 1977) to their superior abilities (Book, 2000). Watson's (2004) research confirmed that there continue to be barriers to women's emergence as leaders.

Many debates and arguments concerning the concept of leadership and its relation to women's roles are directly related to gender inequality. Aguilar and Lacsamana (2004) noted that "globalization has created an international division of labor" (p. 18), with women as the working class by virtue of their gender. Other arguments include differences in leadership styles and effectiveness: the notion that women's views of work are different from men's, with women putting family first; or that women are less likely to promote themselves, are less likely to take on group leadership and facilitating roles, and are viewed in a negative way if they compete with men in such situations. Some argued that women are less self-promoting and do not ask for what they want. Gender bias tied to stereotypical views, such as "women take care and men take charge," has perpetuated myths concerning women's leadership abilities. And because leadership

was synonymous with power, a gender-biased perception against women being identified as leaders has persisted.

Hogg (2001) reported that social identity theory provides a unique perspective of leadership emergence as it explains how an emerging leader fits into or becomes like the group that he or she wishes to lead; and as a result, the emerging leader is perceived as more attractive and influential.

Sinclair (2007) further proposed that in the development of leaders, it is vitally important to look into the background and childhood of individuals, as the key to successful or bad leadership is found in their childhood experiences. The family units, whatever their compositions, and the family homes are fertile grounds for leadership development; it follows that women, who are the principal caregivers, are the teachers and developers of leaders. Women have the power to transform their daughters into leaders; however, they are “constrained by contexts” because work routinely performed by women is devalued. Women can employ different techniques for performing leadership work in the home, for example, as Sinclair (2007) noted, by employing a framework that “can undertake powerful acts beyond the usual understanding of directing from the top” (p. 86). These acts that allow for the proper management of the household (such as financial management, supervision, childcare, food preparation, collaboration, and consultation with community agencies) are learned, and they become indispensable skills, the markings of good leadership qualities.

In the United States, women make up 58.6% of the labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). McKeown (2011) reported that there are more women in the workforce than men; however, women are visibly absent from top spots in corporate America, and only 14 companies in the S&P 100 have two or more diverse minority personnel in top positions.

Globally, women do not hold positions of power and influence in numbers that are proportionate to their numbers in the general population, and consequently, as a group, women are less likely to be perceived as leaders.

According to researchers (Book, 2000; Helgesen, 1990; and Rosener, 1995), gender plays a pivotal role in leadership style. Alexandre (2004) noted that patriarchy is a male-dominated social system that wields power and control over dependent females and males in the home and conspires in excluding women from leadership positions, ensuring their invisibility. Opposite views (e.g., Dobbins & Platz, 1986; Powell, 1990; and Van Engen, Van der Leeden, & Willemsen, 2001) challenged that notion and argued that gender and leadership styles are not mutually exclusive. Eagly and Johnson (1990) noted that contrary to stereotypical expectations, women were more democratic or participative in their leadership styles than men. Later studies by Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) found that did gender affect leadership styles: the female leadership style was more transformational than males and consequently more reward driven. In studying leadership and gender effectiveness, Eagly, Karau, and Makhijani (1995) reported that, overall, both genders were equally effective in leadership roles; however, women were less effective in highly masculinized positions such as the military but were more successful in roles such as education, government, and social science.

The “glass ceiling,” according to the U.S. Department of Labor, Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995), “is the unseen yet unbreakable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements” (p. 4). This invisible obstruction, which prevents those in lower levels from rising to positions of power and influence, has kept women and other minorities from leadership positions. The glass ceiling, which is a global phenomenon, affects not only women and the

opportunities that are denied them but also the nondominant groups as well (Powell & Graves, 2003). Human capital factors (education, training, and work experience), according to Eagly and Carli (2003), are the main barriers to women who experience the glass ceiling effect.

In that women earn more bachelor's degrees than men, the small number of women in leadership roles is not due to lack of human capital. With the emergence of the Women's Movement and of Women's Studies at educational institutions, women and progressive men have sought to change and challenge how leadership is defined and associated, while rightfully including feminine leadership in the canon (Hoyt, 2007).

Pervasive stereotypes about women and leadership were documented by researchers such as Dodge, Gilroy, and Fenzel (1995); and Heilman (2001), who noted that women were described with attributes such as sensitivity and warmth, while men were described as confident, assertive, and rational. Northouse (2007) concluded that substantial empirical evidence reveals that gender stereotypes significantly alter the perception and evaluation of female leaders and directly affect women in or aspiring to leadership roles. Feminists weighed in with counter perceptions and an insistence on women's capacity for, and right to, leadership. Feminism as reported by Evans (1995) means

that we seek for women the same opportunities and privileges that society gives to men, or . . . that we assert the distinctive value of womanhood against patriarchal denigration. While these positions need not be mutually exclusive, there is a strong tendency . . . to make them so. Either we want to be like men or we don't. (p. 2)

The birth and development of the international women's movement, according to Alexandre (2007), were greatly influenced by Europe and the United States, and the movement's leadership was dominated by white, elite Christian women—reflecting biases of privilege, education, and Eurocentric ideals.

The feminist movement reached its zenith in the United States in the 1960s. During this period, college-educated White women were struggling with their identities and seeking ways to address sex discrimination in higher education. Betty Friedan in her book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) challenged unhappy housewives and supported them in their quest for equality as they demanded equal rights with men. Friedan pointed to the drudgery faced by educated women, capable of careers, who were being stifled as homemakers and saddled with domestic chores, including child rearing. bell hooks and other activists criticized Friedan for neither challenging the legal hurdles of women's equality nor seeking to support the plight of women of color and working-class women. hooks (2000) continued by stating that while Friedan and her cohorts were challenging the problems of sex discrimination and of White and class privilege, women of color such as Fannie Lou Hamer, Septima Clark, Ella Baker, Anne Moody, and others were rebelling against sexism within the civil rights movement, calling for Black liberation (p. x). When women of color and White women collaborated during the feminist movement, they challenged the idea that "gender" was the ultimate determinant of women's fate, instead recognizing the triple effects of gender, race, and class. The feminist movement has fundamentally changed society for the better in many ways, and everyone has benefited from the changes. The feminist agenda continues to help shape how leadership is perceived and experienced, especially by women.

The decades of the late 50s, 60s, and 70s in the United States, with far-reaching influences around the world, saw the birth and emerging revolutions of the civil rights movement, the women's movement, civil and political unrest, and an increase in books published by women—such as Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969); Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963); *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (Boston Women's Collective, 1973);

Lucille Clifton's (1987) *Good Woman: Poems and a Memoir, 1969–1980*; and Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962)—as well as Gloria Steinem's founding of *Ms. Magazine*. From these arenas emerged feminists, activists, and leaders who helped frame the feminist movement. Feminist ideology defended the rights of women and girls, thereby advocating for political, economic, and social justice. Feminism demanded equality and parity for women and in so doing sought equitable opportunities in education and employment (hooks, 2000).

Davis (1983), a Black feminist, commented on gender and leadership by observing that within the Black society, acknowledged women leaders such as Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, and Rosa Parks were not anomalies; rather, they epitomized Black womanhood because Black women have always worked and led in their communities. W. E. B. Du Bois (1920) affirmed that as a direct consequence of the equality of oppression they endured during slavery (Black women and Black men were equally oppressed), Black women had freedom and independence to live and make certain choices that were denied White women. While this seems counterintuitive, these freedoms resulted from Black women as a group being, to a great extent, ignored. They were not acknowledged by the dominant culture as worthy of the love, protection, privilege, and status afforded to White women, and therefore were not subject to the same limitations that were applied to White females. (Du Bois, 1920, p. 214).

The feminist revolution was at first described as waves: first, second, and third waves were distinct periods in the feminist movement, with major accomplishments for women achieved in each wave. The first wave began in the United Kingdom and the United States in the late 19th century, challenging de jure biases against women. The second wave built on the first wave, addressing de facto discriminations and biases. In the third wave, women of all ethnic and class backgrounds found unity by recognizing their differences: acknowledging that each woman

is positioned uniquely as a result of her age, ethnicity, financial situation, religion, and geographical location.

The second and third waves promoted, challenged, and demanded women's rights, which are generally understood by feminists and their male supporters as contract laws to protect property and voting; reproductive rights governing sexual health; access to birth control (contraceptives and abortion) to guide decisions on family size, that is, the number of children or no children; protection against sexual assault, workplace harassment, or other forms of violence or intimidation; and advocacy for maternity leave and the holistic welfare of women. hooks (2000) noted that "men are socialized to avoid assuming responsibility for child rearing, and that avoidance is supported by women who believe that motherhood is a sphere of power they would lose if men participated equally in parenting" (p. 140).

Some feminists, including hooks, believe that men are harmed when both genders operate in a sexist society; therefore it should be in men's interest to support the feminist agenda. However, while the feminist movement gave voice and opportunities to women and girls, women elders in the public sphere were for the most part invisible and silent; in the private sphere such as the family, women elders were visible, thus giving rise to the need for a platform to share their stories.

Family Leadership

Leadership begins at home.

Ann Crittenden, *If You've Raised Kids, You Can Manage Anything*

Leadership happens in families, and the home is the first training ground for leaders. Parents first help to develop leadership qualities in their children within the framework of the home. Family leadership, and parents as leaders who nurture and instill leadership qualities in their offspring, are emerging concepts that shift the family's traditional focus from raising

children to creating potential leaders. On the whole, parents globally are more educated than parents were 50 years ago and are more interested their children's social and intellectual development. Nutrition, schooling, and changes in child rearing have positively affected the family as a unit. Modern advances and knowledge about nutrients and foods have helped families provide good quality foods to their families, resulting in increased stature and intellectual growth (Lynn, 1990). In our modern society, children attend school for many more years than their parents and grandparents did, and are engaged in intellectual activities that promote higher IQs and more creativity. Today's parents practice modern child-rearing techniques geared toward helping their children grow progressively in all areas of childhood development. The present intellectual environment of children is impacted by their experiences with and exposures to modern mass media made available through computers, television, video games, and the Internet (Neisser, 1997). These advantages, as well as school and family discussions, provide the structure for leadership development for both parents and children.

Walker (2011) noted that family leadership development encouraged parents to create their own vision of leadership for their families, thus empowering their children to begin developing leadership skills during their formative years. As parent leaders, parents can help to change and redesign the language of leadership, challenging the historical elitist model. The elitist model recognized men as leaders, who derived power from "the office they hold" (Klenke, 2011, p. xii). Parents as leaders, and family leadership practices, can revolutionize the child-development process, positively affecting change in how leadership is recognized and identified.

The home is the first center of leadership, and training there develops skills, organization, and character (Crittenden, 2004). These skills are relevant and transferrable to the workplace, whether corporate or otherwise. Crittenden interviewed women who were mothers, CEOs, and

top executives and asked them if they had learned management skills from motherhood. Some of the comments were:

Both parenting and managing adults require that you accept people for who they are . . . coach them . . . support them . . . and get out of their way (Pamela Thomas-Graham, CEO, CNBC).

I'm concerned about all this commentary that you cannot have children if you are a successful executive. Nonsense! You're better if you have kids (Shelly Lazarus, Chairman and CEO of Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide).

There is no better career preparation than parenthood (Shirley Strum Kenny, president, State University of New York, mother of five).

Two year olds taught me a lot about customer service, managing by objectives, and utilizing a system of rewards to improve performance (Geraldine Laybourne, chairman and chief executive of Oxygen Media). (Crittenden, 2004, p. 5)

Likewise, Covey (1997), author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*, noted that “applying the 7 habits material to the family is an absolute natural” (p. 2). Covey contended that these identified “7 habits” are universal, timeless, and common to all successful families; and that there are three essential life tools: a clear vision of one’s destination, a flight plan, and a compass.

Because of the complexities of the modern family, family leadership development requires training that builds physical and mental skill sets that promote the confidence and competencies that prepare children for leadership. The grandmother-granddaughter dyad can be an important part of family leadership dynamics and therefore often plays a significant role in promoting the well-being of the family unit. In addition, the grandmother-granddaughter link contributes to feminist leadership ideals, including the training and nurturing of granddaughters to develop leadership skills.

Transferable Family Leadership Skills

According to Crittenden (2004) the family unit helps develop essentials such as multitasking and interpersonal skills, and helps grow human capabilities. Multitasking is the art of managing several projects and activities, while controlling the flow of events. Children can be trained consciously and/or subconsciously to prioritize their educational and co-curricular activities, set goals, and complete tasks. Multitasking is a vital leadership skill set, one that parents are easily able to transfer to the workplace. Multitasking can become an invaluable tool as children mature into adolescence and later into adulthood. Interpersonal skills are also essential as they help children interface with adults and their peers. Interpersonal skills include the ability to understand others' points of view, to exercise patience, to develop empathy, and to recognize each person's unique talent and contribution. The process of growing human capabilities guides parents in empowering and mentoring, which build self-esteem. The area of family leadership development also includes "positive reinforcement and the ability to articulate a vision" (Crittenden, 2004, p. 8). Family members are allowed to make mistakes, with the opportunities to bounce back and learn from the experiences. Another identified path to family leadership success includes character building, developing habits of integrity, and establishing a stable home environment. Crittenden (2004) further contended that good parenting skills develop excellent leadership skills, yet most employers do not recognize parenting skills as equivalent to leadership experience on a parents' résumé because child rearing is still seen as unskilled labor or not real work.

Parents are children's first and most important teachers and advocates. Parents who are becoming leaders and training children to become leaders, according to Westheimer (2002), should become *Parents as Consumers*—making decisions, becoming knowledgeable and

powerful as they work for their children's best interests—rather than being *Parents as Clients* who are passive and uninformed about issues concerning to their children. The path to *Parents as Consumers* involves a developmental process: from engagement to involvement to empowerment. Westheimer further stated that there is a need for parent leaders who have grown in their roles to become examples and to “influence other parents and professional and other systems” (p. 5). Here are three examples of parent leadership identified by Westheimer:

- parent (mother) making a difference for her children: Kim Giarratana, a stay-at-home mother, observed that the neighborhood playground equipment was badly in need of repair. She contacted the park service and several other agencies seeking help to get the playground equipment fixed. Kim soon realized that she had to become more involved to get the work done. She sought the help of other parents and organized a volunteer group of 400 to repair the playground equipment. This success led to her being appointed as Chair of the Steering Committee and Board of Directors of Danbury Children First (DCF).
- parent (father) advocating for education: E. J. Junkins was a homeless and single parent of two young children. He stated that he was angry and scared: angry that his wife had left him with two children to care for and scared that his children would be taken from him due to his status. As he became involved in his children's school, he ran for and became president of the Parents' Association, became a member of the Head Start Parent Policy Council, and was later elected to the Board of the National Head Start Association. As a father advocate at CalWorks, Junkins works with fathers and helps them become leaders for their children.

- grandmother supporting education and families: Mary Hunter, a grandmother providing primary care for her seven-month-old granddaughter, was asked to join an early Head Start program to learn about child development. She was asked to become a member of the Parent Committee; she accepted, and because of her active participation, soon became its president. She later joined the local Early Head Start Policy Council. Hunter took her granddaughter with her to meetings and budget hearings. When a paid position became available at the University of Pittsburgh's Office of Child Development, Hunter applied and got the job. The leadership and professional skills and knowledge she had acquired proved useful in her new position. In working with parents, Hunter noted that her previous jobs as salesperson, operating-room technician, and telemarketer had also prepared her for her present position as co-chair of the Family Support Policy Board. She further stated, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care" (p. 13).

These examples—parent (mother) making a difference for her children, a father's advocacy for education, and family (grandmother) support—show how parents have used their family roles to become not only leaders in their own lives but also community leaders influencing policies and helping make broader decisions concerning the welfare of their children. The former Dollar General president and chairman Cal Turner, Jr., credits his family for his success and notes that the nurturing he received, and the leadership lessons he learned, were from his father, Cal senior, and from his grandfather, Luther Turner. He endeavored to learn something from every person he met and noted that "he who assumes that is a leader." His father nurtured his leadership by praising him and telling him how smart he was; he in turn, tried to live up to the praise he received from his family. He further stated that he was nurtured by his family,

church, and community, and that as a leader searches for success, he or she should be guided by personal responsibility (Minor, 2013).

There are many more documented stories of parents and grandparents transitioning from leadership in the home, where they influence children's leadership potential, to leadership roles in their communities. Cunningham, Kreider, and Ocón (2012) noted that parents' engagement in various school and community activities can positively impact their children's academic achievement, regardless of economic status or ethnic background. Parents engaged in leadership become role models for their children as well as for their communities.

Henderson and Mapp (2002) identified and reviewed 80 research studies published over the past eight or nine years, within the United States, that examined "the influence of family and community involvement on student academic achievement" (p. 13). Of the 80 studies identified, 51 studies were chosen for in-depth reviews based on the following criteria: early childhood through high school; all geographic regions; diverse racial, socio-economic, and educational levels; involvement of family and community; use of quantitative and qualitative methods; and use of a variety of data collection methods. Six types of parent involvement for grades 8 to 12 were examined, looking at six types of family involvement: parenting (supervising homework, limiting television viewing, expressing expectations), communicating (parent-initiated contacts, and school-initiated contacts), school support (volunteering), learning at home (music, academic lessons), decision making (participating in parent groups), and collaborating with community (scouts, sports, and museum and other class trips). The findings from these studies revealed that taken as a whole, all groups benefited from positive family involvement in the academic achievements of their children. These benefits were higher grade-point averages and scores on standardized tests or rating scales, enrollment in more challenging academic programs, more

classes passed and more credits earned, better attendance, better social skills, and better adaptation to school (p. 29).

Families and parent leaders who are engaged with their children's educational development (helping with homework, supporting engagement in sports, providing exposure to cultural experiences), regardless of parental education level or racial identity, through their examples provide their children with the tools to develop leadership qualities. These children learn leadership qualities from their parents, enhancing their educational experiences. Moreover, these children overall achieve better grades and test scores, are promoted, have regular attendance, and go on to college. Parents' leadership involvement in school and the community tends to result in better physical facilities, "improved school leadership and staffing, new resources . . . after school programs and family support" (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 14).

While the literature only rarely addresses the leadership role of grandmothers and their positive impact on the lives of their granddaughters—the female focus—grandparents and their influence on the lives of grandchildren have been widely documented (Fuller-Thomson & Minkler, 2007; Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981; Simpson, 2008; and Weinberger, 2009). Prior to 1900, having all of one's grandparents alive was a rare occurrence, and the increase in scholarly interest in grandparents is due to the longevity of the population as a whole (Barranti, 1985, and Block, 2000). By the year 2030, the number people in the United States who are 65 years of age and older will reach 72 million (U.S. Administration on Aging, Population Division, 2005).

Cherlin and Frustenberg (1985) described grandparents as detached, passive, supportive, authoritative, and influential, but they were not identified as leaders, per se. Several factors influenced the role of grandparenthood, according to the *International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family* (Ponzetti, 2003), such as an increase in the numbers of single-family households, of

divorces, of deaths, and of births out of wedlock. These same factors may also have increased “the number of multigenerational living styles,” and “intergenerational relationships and norms” (p. 1). Multigenerational living was defined as three or more generations of family members living together—for example, grandparents, parents, and children (grandchildren).

Empirical research on intergenerational relations included concepts such as relational and familial bonds, family life, and family life-cycle (Bengtson & Allen, 1993). They noted that the life-course perspective discourse began in the early 20th century. Intergenerational transmission was defined as the interactions and influence of relationships between extended family members with ongoing interactions between the generations.

Intergenerational transmission of influence on culture and traditions is highly associated with the grandparents’ presence in the lives of their grandchildren (Wiscott & Kopera-Frye, 2000), while Kostecky and Bass (2004) implied that grandparents’ influences may be demonstrated in such areas as admiration and affection. Silverstein and Marengo (2001) further noted that the grandparents’ sphere of influence is directly tied to their educational status. Grandparents with higher levels of education played more prominent educational roles in the lives of their grandchildren, while those grandparents with less education were more likely to be involved in domestic roles such as babysitting. Over the past three decades, intergenerational solidarity—that is, the support (emotional and financial) provided by an elder family member to adult children or grandchildren—has been associated with empirical research involving adults’ intergenerational relationships and family cohesion (Atkinson, Kivett, & Campbell, 1986; Lee, Netzer, & Coward, 1994; Rosenthal, 1987; and Rossi & Rossi, 1990). While my goal is to research the leadership impact of grandmothers on their granddaughters, a high percentage of the literature reviewed deals with the roles of both grandparents, not just grandmothers.

Grandmother-Granddaughter Influence

The grandmother-granddaughter dyad, according to Thomas (1994), is directly linked to the mother-daughter relationship. Usually mothers socialize their daughters differently from how they socialize their sons and spend more time with their daughters; this fact in turn is reflected in the grandmother-daughter-granddaughter influence. The life course perspective, according to Mitchell (2003), looks at the lives and histories of individuals and reviews how early-life experiences shape future fundamental decisions. This perspective is key to the examination of the grandmother-granddaughter phenomenon. A fundamental tenet of the life course perspective is how the past shapes the future: Early-life decisions and actions play critical roles in present and future outcomes (Mitchell, 2003)—a dynamic known as the “domino effect” or “ripple effect.” This effect can be positive or negative. Mitchell further explained that an example of this ripple effect could be an historical event such as the feminist movement affecting different generations at various levels of their life cycle. According to Giele and Elder (1998), one’s life course refers to “a sequence of socially defined events and roles that the individual enacts over time” (p. 22). These experiences help define the person’s value system. Life course combines historical, social, and personal experiences, which are viewed through the lenses of time, context, and process (Bengston & Allen, 1993).

Stoller and Gibson (2000) confirmed that the life course approach has emerged as a suitable model for research on cultural diversity, on aging families, and on cross-national comparisons. Mitchell (2003) further observed that the life course approach has been used in various cross-national research within the past decade (Bucher & May, 1998; Fuse, 1996; Gupta, 1995; Hareven, 1996; and Lewis, 1998), providing “unique opportunities” to examine the intersection of culture and history “with the experiences of individuals and families” (p. 1054).

Weiss's (1974) mediating primary group theory also has value for the examination of the grandmother-granddaughter study. The theory proposed that a person's "beliefs, attitudes, and understandings were formed in primary groups to which we once belonged" (p. 18). The primary group affiliation kept the individual attached and grounded, because without a relationship with the primary group, people become hopeless and discouraged, negatively influencing the cognitive and emotional state.

Weiss (1974) described six categories of relational provisions: attachment, social integration, opportunity for nurturance, reassurance of worth, a sense of reliable alliance, and the obtaining of guidance. According to Cutrona and Russell (1987), these are six

social functions . . . that may be obtained from relationships with others. He [Weiss] contends that all six provisions are needed for individuals to feel adequately supported and to avoid loneliness. . . . Each of the provisions is most often obtained from a particular kind of relationship, but multiple provisions may be obtained from the same person. (p. 39)

- Attachment is provided in a relationship in which the individual finds security, such as in a marriage or a cross-sex relationship. Attachment relationships require "a sense of nearly steady accessibility" such as a close grandmother-granddaughter relationship.
- Social integration is provided in a network relationship. It offers a base for social connection and activities.
- Opportunity for nurturance can occur in a relationship when an adult "takes responsibility for the well-being of a child and so can develop a sense of [the adult] being needed" (Weiss, 1974, p. 23).
- Reassurance of worth can occur in a relationship that affords an individual "competency" in a social role—for example, a grandmother raising a granddaughter.

- A sense of reliable alliance is found only in “kin” relationships. An individual who is cut off from kin might feel abandoned or vulnerable.
- The obtaining of guidance in relationships can provide individuals with access to authority figures, to relationships of trust and value, and to help and guidance when necessary in making fundamental decisions.

These six categories of relational provisions are values that I used to guide my research on grandmother-granddaughter relations.

The quality of grandmother-granddaughter relationships is determined by the personal and group positions within the cultural setting; therefore frequency of contact can positively influence the grandmother-granddaughter connection (Kemp, 2007). The granddaughter, over time, might model the grandmother’s values, thus mirroring symbolic interaction theory. People’s actions toward things are based on the meaning and value of those things to them; this is a response to their social interaction (Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003). Symbolic interaction theory can be applied to the study of grandmothers and granddaughters, in that grandmothers influence their granddaughters to live up to certain expectations that they set.

Uhlenberg and Hammill (1998) stressed the importance of the grandmother’s influence on the granddaughter and stated that such influence is directly linked to the grandmother-mother relationship. If there is a disconnect between the grandmother and the mother, then the granddaughter might miss out on early connections with the grandmother, affecting the strength of the relationship bond. The strong connection of the grandmother-granddaughter relationship is due to the perceptions that women are nurturers, preservers of family traditions, transmitters of societal values, and keepers and communicators of family rites and rituals (Block, 2000; Rossi 1993; and Uhlenberg & Hammill, 1998).

The steady growth of elderly women (grandmothers) providing long-term care for their grandchildren is well documented (Gladstone, Brown, & Fitzgerald 2009; Hayslip & Kaminsky, 2005), with grandmothers being the most common substitute as kinship caregivers of children. Campbell and Handy (2011) applied the concept of “double bind” to the grandmother-granddaughter relationship. Double bind, first coined by Bateson (1991), was defined as a complex state of “dilemma in communication” in which a person or group conveyed conflicting messages or actions. The person or group receiving the message or action was usually unable to make a decision because of the emotional conflicts attached to the dilemma. Campbell and Handy’s research implied that grandmothers raising grandchildren are placed in a unique situation, a condition that creates conflict, adversely affecting the family values of providing care and equitable treatment to family members. Climo, Terry, and Lay (2002) also suggested that the double-bind concept creates distress for grandmothers as they deal with intergenerational integrity and the disempowerment of their adult children.

One study of granddaughters’ relational development with maternal grandmothers (Holladay et al., 1998) examined granddaughters’ turning points in their relationships with their maternal grandmothers, illustrating how grandmothers influence leadership development in granddaughters. The researchers used a retrospective interviewing technique that revealed both normative and idiosyncratic events. They examined the turning points or changes in the relationships “on granddaughters’ feelings.” Events and factors that strengthened closeness included deaths or serious illness in the family and close geographical proximity. This type of research is significant because it helped document what was considered the “turning point” of the grandmother-granddaughter relationship.

Portman, Bartlett, and Carlson (2010) used relational theory and intergenerational connectedness to examine adolescent female and older women interactions. The work of feminist scholars (Gilligan, 1982; Goldner, 2002; and Miller, 1976) advocated for self-actualization: developing a sense of self, which is vital to female identity. Gilligan (1982) stressed the importance of women and girls' finding their "voice" even as they are socialized to remain silent to avoid conflict. This silence sometimes leads to isolation and violence (Brown & Gilligan, 1992).

Weinberger (2009), whose grandmother's influence greatly shaped her life, shared her lived experience and gave details of the mentoring she received from her beloved Nana (grandmother). She stated the benefits of mentoring, which included improved academic performance and improved grades. Simpson (2008) explored the qualitative perspective of family resources among low-income African American grandmother-caregivers residing in West Baltimore: two widows, two divorcees, and three singles. This ethnographic study of seven grandmothers captured their perceptions of available support and revealed that little support was in place for those grandparent-caregivers.

In *Grandmother Power*, Gianturco (2012) wrote about the global phenomenon of grandmothers as leaders who were activists and revolutionaries in a manner historically unseen and unrecognized in the past. Kellerman and Rhode (2007), editors of *Women and Leadership*, explored the world of women leaders and remarked on how much the world of women had changed over the past century; however, women were still persistently underrepresented in leadership positions, due to "women's disproportionate responsibilities in the home which has limited their opportunities in the world outside" (p. xiv).

The review of the literature on leadership in general, and women's leadership in particular, opens up the opportunity for further discourse on a unique area of leadership, that of grandmothers' influence. Kellerman and Rhode (2007) contended that "in an increasingly competitive global environment, no society can afford to hobble half its talent pool" (p. xvi). This talent pool of which they wrote is that of the female gender, including grandmothers; and while the attitudes, cultural biases, and double standards that kept women in subordinate positions are being challenged and are no longer the dominant leadership model, in such constrained situations, many women still face barriers to leadership. Research on the grandmother-granddaughter leadership influence might help to rectify this past imbalance.

Methodology

Introduction

This section of the dissertation details the methodological process that was used in the research. The study utilizes a qualitative design in the form of interviews. A qualitative method seeks to discover the in-depth human behavior of the how and why of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 1998). This empirical inquiry examines the grandmother-granddaughter leadership phenomenon within the real-life context.

Bruyn (1966) wrote that the phenomenological approach allows the researcher to enter into the perceptions of participants and to see life as they have experienced it. A phenomenological perspective focuses not only on a phenomenon but on the perspectives and lived experiences of the participants (Riemen, 1986). Such a phenomenological inquiry provides a philosophical existential perspective that accentuates the worth of a person and examines his or her lived experiences, while looking at the prospect for change (Creswell, 1998). Both the epistemological and theoretical frameworks are given, as well as a comprehensive overview of the process to be followed.

This chapter will include descriptions of the following: (a) rationale for the research approach, (b) basis for use of the phenomenological approach, (c) use of the case study methodology, (d) description of the research sample, (e) how the participants were selected, (f) the method of data collection, (g) analysis and synthesis of data, (h) ethical issues, (i) trustworthiness, (j) credibility, (k) transferability, (l) dependability and confirmability, and (m) limitations of the study. The chapter will end with a summary and remarks for the introduction of the following chapter, Analyzing Data and Reporting Findings.

The Research Questions

The essential research question of this study is: “How have grandmothers’ interactions and/or relationships with their granddaughters during the formative years influenced the leadership potential and success of the adult granddaughters?” Additional questions relevant to the study are:

- What important factors characterize how grandmothers influence granddaughters?
- What are the grandmothers’ identifiable leadership qualities that enable mentoring and leadership development in their granddaughters?
- What are the commonalities, if any, of grandmothers who positively influence granddaughters?
- How, if at all, does culture, or geographical location, or how women are treated in that location, influence leadership transmission from grandmother to granddaughter?

Rationale for Research Approach

Qualitative research is an inquiry method that allows for the exploration of a social or human problem (Creswell, 1998), using tested and trusted methods of obtaining information, analyzing the data, and reporting the findings of the participants. A qualitative methodology was selected for this study because of the ability of a phenomenological method to describe the experience of the participants in diverse ways, in a particular context, with an emphasis on gaining a holistic understanding of the participants’ experiences. It allows for the gathering of data in a form that permits participants to have direct input and allows the researcher to study participants in their life situations. This research technique is especially efficient in the gathering and analyzing of exploratory data. Interviews are effective methods of gathering information in a qualitative study. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) support the use of this model. They noted that

qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in the individuals' lives. (p. 2)

Rationale for Phenomenological Inquiry

Hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry is appropriate for this study to help understand the grandmother-granddaughter leadership interaction and influence. Phenomenology allows the researcher to delve vicariously into the experiences of the participants in order to more fully understand the experiences being shared. The use of qualitative interviews in a variety of formats is an ideal approach to elicit and emphasize shared experiences. Phenomenology, the study of the lived experience, allows for a deep understanding of the everyday experiences of what it means to be human (Merriam, 1998). In investigating the meaning of human lived experiences, Husserl (1931) and later scholars such as Merleau-Ponty (1962) noted that phenomenology provides the “intentionality of consciousness,” an essential element in allowing the researcher a grasp of memory, image and meaning.

Phenomenology helps explain how the lived experience is reported by the participants. Van Manen (1990) further noted that the phenomenological perspective in research allows the researcher as well as the participants to question the lived experiences of the participants' world. The phenomenological perspective provides participants with the opportunity for reflection, by which they gain deeper understanding of the lived experience. This inquiry can provide an essential format for exploring the grandmother-granddaughter leadership experience.

Case Study Methodology

The qualitative approach allows for the use of a case study design, which is well suited for this study. The case study model allows for a descriptive or exploratory process in order to find, identify, and explain a phenomenon. It allows for in-depth understanding and insights into

the case being studied. To extract deep meanings from the participants' stories, this section employs Kvale's model of seven stages of planning an interview investigation: "thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting" (1996, p. 88). Special attention focuses on stages 2, 3 and 4: designing, interviewing, and transcribing. Thematizing informs the purpose for the interviews: clarifying the who, what, and why of grandmothers' leadership influence on granddaughters. Kvale's stages 2, 3, and 4 are especially useful for this study and are outlined as follows:

- Stage 2. Designing. The design took into consideration all seven stages of the investigation.
- Stage 3. Interviewing. I gave a detailed question guide to the participants prior to the meeting. Each taped session was expected to last approximately one hour or until the participant was satisfied that she had fully shared her story. I used in-depth interviewing to gather information from the participants.
- Stage 4. Transcribing. The transcription software prepared data for analysis. I used an online electronic system to transcribe all interviews, verbatim.

The use of Kvale's stages allowed me to work progressively and in an orderly way through the research process. In addition, the three selected stages were fundamental to the holistic development of the study and to the documentation of the participants' experiences.

The exchange of ideas through conversations and interviews is both an old and a modern method of gaining knowledge; however, systematic interviewing is a new research phenomenon that began in the late 19th century (Kvale, 2008). Today, with the development of modern technology, it is a popular method for sociologists and anthropologists who use computers as well as audio and video recorders. I gathered data through interviews that I recorded using digital

audio or video equipment. I conducted interviews at the convenience of the participants, whether in their homes or in a different environment that was conducive to their comfort level. I developed a list of questions to guide the interviews. The area of inquiry that I focused on in the interview is: “How has your grandmother contributed to your success?” As stated earlier, this is a global study; which included women from Bosnia, Pakistan, India, Haiti, Jamaica, England, China, Mexico, the United States, and Ghana. I employed a snowball sampling method, allowing participants to self-select and to recommend others. After the interviews, I continued the conversation by asking if there was anything else they wanted to add to the conversation that was not said during the recorded session.

Description of the research sample. In a qualitative approach, finding information-rich participants is critical to the soundness of the study. The process required gaining access and establishing rapport so that the participants were comfortable in sharing information and thus allowed the gathering of good data (Creswell, 1998). The sample was made up of 20 adult women, varying in ages from their forties through their sixties, who had varied experiences with their grandmothers during their formative years. The group of women came from diverse backgrounds: ethnic, socio-economic, cultural, educational, racial, religious, and ideological. By their own descriptions and definitions, they are all successful women whose successes were influenced by their grandmothers’ leadership qualities. The participants included women working in and outside the home, and those who are unemployed, underemployed, or retired.

Participant selection. The unit of analysis or sample used in a qualitative study helps determine how participants are selected for the study. According to Merriam (1998), a non-probability sampling strategy is most fitting for a qualitative study, and purposeful sampling is commonly used. Purposeful sampling is a popular approach for finding good samples in

qualitative research and is the most appropriate strategy for this study, because by utilizing the snowball or chain method (also called *network* method), the known participants help to identify others with the same characteristics, a dynamic that can yield rich interview information and provide appropriate samples for the study (Patton, 1990). A snowball or chain sampling technique is utilized when participants are willing to share their knowledge of other people whom they know would be a “good fit” for the study. The snowball imagery is that of rolling a snowball that gets bigger as more snow is added to the original ball. There is a link or connective thread between participants, hence the terms *chain* or *network* sampling.

The snowball, chain, or network sample was used to identify information-rich cases. Such sampling worked very well for this study and provided diverse participants because of the location where the study takes place: a small college town in South Central Pennsylvania with an influx of international people who work at the college. In addition, participants were drawn from medical staff at the local hospital, which also provides a pool of diverse people. Participants already engaged in the study helped to recruit others by informing the researcher of those acquaintances. The sample group grew in number as newly identified prospective subjects were added to the study. The findings of the study produced most of the factors mentioned in section (d) for an optimum diverse sample: age, size, and group characteristics.

Potential participants were found locally; flyers advertising the study were placed in strategic locations around town: the local supermarket, the gym, the natural food store, the hospital, several restaurants, and social and religious centers. I engaged in a two-phase interview procedure:

Phase 1. Survey. This phase screened for goodness of fit. Potential participants responding to the advertised study were contacted via phone. After hearing a brief description of

the study they were asked three questions: Are you between the ages of 40 and 70 years? Were you influenced by your grandmother in significant ways? Are you willing to participate in the study? If a participant answered “yes” to all three questions, and she was interested in sharing her grandmother-granddaughter story, she was eligible to be included in the sample.

Phase 2. Selection. Using the results of this pre-screening, I applied the criteria to select the twenty participants. Their lived experiences provided rich information for the study.

Data collection: Interviews. The aim of the data collection process is to gather appropriate information and to provide answers to the research question (Merriam, 1998). Data collection in the phenomenological tradition, according to Creswell (1998), includes finding multiple people who experienced the phenomenon, selecting up to 10 people, and making use of in-depth interviews.

- I fully explained to the participants all steps of the procedure.
- By way of a second phone call and/or email to those who had agreed to participate, I confirmed their participation and alleviated any lingering doubts about the research.
- I sent participants a set of open-ended questions for their review, to prepare them for the interviews and digital recording.
- We arranged a date, time, and location for the scheduled interview and recording.
- I gave Informed Consent forms to participants, and reminded them of their option to withdraw from the study at any time during the process.

- I asked participants to share and reflect on their relationships with their grandmothers and to illuminate their lived experiences, using the questions below as a guide. I did not ask these questions verbatim during the interview process, or in any special order. My intent was to cover all these questions by the end of the interview. I took notes during the interviews and sought clarification when necessary with the participants.
- Second and third interviews were available to those who needed to share more in-depth stories.

Questions for participants.

1. Who is the grandmother you wish to talk about?
2. Who were the members of her family?
3. What is the full name of your grandmother?
4. What did you call your grandmother?
5. What did she call you? Was that a special pet name?
6. Where was her birthplace?
7. Where was the geographical/international location?
8. Was your grandmother affected by any historical forces or political crises?
9. How many grandchildren did she have?
10. What was your position in the lineup?
11. What is your earliest recollection of your grandmother?
12. What is your most memorable moment of her?
13. What made your grandmother special or different in your eyes?
14. Can you describe or remember any smell, food, place, activities? And how were you affected?

15. What cultural biases or political, family, or religious values were passed on to you?
16. How many formative years did you spend with your grandmother?
17. Would you consider your grandmother an influential person in her time? Did she participate in any movements for social change? Explain.
18. How were you influenced?
19. Are there identifiable leadership skills that you associate with your grandmother?
20. Upon reflection, how did your grandmother influence who you are today, whether negatively or positively?
21. If you could say one thing to your grandmother today, what would you say?
22. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your relationship with your grandmother?
23. If you are now a grandmother with a granddaughter, what lessons and values from your grandmother will you pass on? What lessons would you not pass on? And why?

Data analysis. Qualitative data analysis strategies provide the opportunity for the examination, detection, and interpretation of the data collected; they include assessing how the participants answered the interview questions. My data analysis strategies were framed through the feminist lens, which ensured sensitivity to the participants' voices in order to provide an opportunity to hear those voices that have historically been excluded. The use of the feminist lens encouraged analysis focused on social and psychological empowerment: challenges to gender stereotypes, efforts to raise social consciousness, and examples of personal and societal transformation. Use of the feminist lens in analyzing the interviews reflected my commitment to and advocacy in defending and promoting equality for women via political, economic, social, educational, and cultural means. Although a feminist can be of either gender, only a woman's

perspective informs my analysis of the data, for obvious reasons. However, as a researcher, I am sympathetic, supportive of, and committed to the feminist cause of equality for all women, whether proponents are female or male.

The use of the feminist-lens analysis helps provide an understanding of women's importance in gender dynamics, transforming how women's lives and experiences are documented and included. In addition, this lens can clarify how the gender dichotomy and the construction of masculinity are the antithesis of the construct of femininity, yet the absence of women and their contributions diminishes all contributions. According to Chinn and Wheeler (1985), the feminist lens does not idealize women but rather provides an understanding of female struggles and limitations. While keeping true to the phenomenological tradition for data analysis, which is systematic, disciplined, and interactive, I utilized the suggested model of Miles and Huberman (1994). They recommend writing margin notes, then reflective notes; drafting a summary of the notes; creating metaphors and comparing data; identifying and counting codes; and noting patterns, themes, and relationships between variables. Using the phenomenological model,

- I managed the data: I did this by creating and organizing data files. The software program MAXQDA, an online system for transcription and coding, was used to facilitate analysis of the transcribed interviews. The computer system organized the files so that I was able to quickly and easily find needed information.
- I read and memoed: I read through the text and made additional notes. The computer program helped with easy location of material, such as statements, phrases, or words, reducing the data to help in the development of codes: developing categories and

sorting texts or visual images. I developed a short list of 10 codes and determined how frequently these codes appeared in the narratives.

- I described: I wrote descriptions of the participants' experiences, including their intellectual and emotional significance.
- I classified: I identified the stories and listed statements of meaning for participants. The statements were grouped to identify themes, patterns, and translation of ideas into metaphors. Metaphors allowed me to examine the grandmother-granddaughter dyad being studied in a unique way, to provide a vivid picture of the relationships, and to clarify participants' experiences.
- I interpreted: I developed and interpreted the experiences as documented and described "what was said," "how the influence was experienced," and the "essence" of the experience.
- I represented and visualized: I presented a verbal picture detailing the "essence" of each woman's experience. My previous research experience had provided me with skills to discern and empathize with participants, to represent the female experience, and to visualize the emotions they express. Appendix A holds samples of two participants' statements.

Following my interviews with the participants, I submitted the data for analysis and reported the findings in a qualitative format: I wrote a descriptive profile on each participant, briefly summarizing her story, and then created an integrative summary by putting the stories together into themes. A qualitative study of this sort provides depth and greater meaning to the words and actions of the participants involved in the study.

Based on the data gathered from the analysis and my synthesis, I was able to examine the implications of the research. Areas for consideration were ethical issues, trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability), and limitations of the study.

Methods and Procedures for Data Analysis and Synthesis

Ethical issues. Ethical practices are paramount to the efficacy of the research. While protecting anonymity of the participants would be required for some methods, in this instance, because of the data collection method of video recording, the participants in this study have agreed to the video being shown or streamed. I obtained an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the study from Antioch University, with an emphasis on ensuring that the participants consented to have their identities known. The video recordings provided me with the opportunity to observe body language, surroundings, nuances, and other elements that I might have missed in the interview setting. The video recording allowed me to view and review the interviews as needed, in comparison to an audio recording that would provide only the voice and not the visual aspect of the experience. As the researcher, I checked and rechecked myself and the data to make sure that I was presenting an accurate description of my own experience of the conversation. I also exercised care in identifying and documenting statements made by the participants, being careful to avoid bias or prejudice, while giving equal value to each and being honest in all areas of the analysis.

Trustworthiness of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that the following checks should be applied when assessing the quality of the study: (a) interviews—were they well-constructed? (b) content—was it accurately examined? and (c) data and conclusion—are they congruent? The traditional standards for judging trustworthiness are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. However, Guba (1981) challenged the traditional

standards for judging trustworthiness and instead proposed four new terms: credibility (instead of internal validity), transferability (instead of external validity), dependability (instead of reliability), and confirmability (instead of objectivity). Using Guba (1981) as a guide, I employed his terminology for this study. The four criteria that I used for judging the trustworthiness of this qualitative inquiry are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility. Credibility pertains to trustworthiness in reference to the participants, and requires in-depth engagement, broad observations, referential capability, peer debriefing, and member checks. In order to avoid bias and distortion member checks are critical for establishing credibility. To address credibility, I used member checks: the participants were asked to review the data (their responses to the questions) and confirm, refute, further explain, or fill in any gaps in the data, and to ensure that the results of the study are believable and trustworthy. The participants are best suited to judge the credibility of the study. The significance of credibility to this study involves showing that the results of the research are believable based on the perspectives of the participants; in other words, can the readers trust the stories as reported by the women and authentically documented by me? As the researcher, I endeavored to truthfully report and present the women's stories, avoiding personal biases and distortions. The depth and richness of the study are evident to the extent that the data speak to the findings: I provided clear and strong description of the settings (where and why), and how they were selected; a full description of each participant; a full description of the procedure and my response; and my thoughts, impressions and descriptions of each setting. By thoughtful design, I provided visualizations—a kaleidoscope of each experience, within the boundaries of the study.

Transferability. Transferability deals with “thick” description. Thick description requires detailed accounts of the experiences reported, and it helps the reader determine the relevance of

the stories to her own experience. Denzin (1989) explained thick description as verisimilitude. According to Creswell (2007), verisimilitude is the use of descriptive terms with the ability to transport the reader to an empathic state where one feels as if he or she were experiencing the event or could have experienced the event being described. Denzin (1989) explained that verisimilitude is achieved when the narrative

presents detail, context, emotions and the webs of social relationships . . . and evokes emotionality and self-feelings. . . . The voices, feeling, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (p. 83)

The “thickness” of the study refers to the action being observed and the meaning that is applied, as well as to the intention and the context in which the action is observed (Denzin, 2001; and Geertz, 1973). Thus, transferability emerged from thick description in the stories, as summarized in Appendix A.

Dependability and confirmability. Dependability looks at the constancy of the research process; it allows for checking to confirm that the procedures followed for the data collection, interpretation, findings, and reporting are within the standard for judging qualitative studies. Confirmability, on the other hand, is the level to which findings of the study are factual and honestly reported (Guba, 1981). To address dependability and confirmability, I applied the following audits:

- I sought the assistance of a former professor of sociology who examined the process of how the data were collected, filed, and preserved.
- I also enlisted member checks to ensure the accuracy of the data collected.
- I established an audit trail that provided a description of the steps followed from the start to the end of the study.

- I enlisted the help of an experienced independent external auditor and provided her with a copy of my proposal, outlining my research path.
- I provided written field notes, with comments.
- I provided a copy of the questions and the video recordings.
- I provided a copy of the time line of the study.
- I provided a copy of my descriptions of the emerged themes.

The auditor cross-referenced and examined the themes that emerged and looked for evidence that led to them, and provided a report with recommendations.

Limitations of the study. There are always limitations in research studies. In this study, limitations are in two areas.

- Lack of representativeness. While much can be learned from this study, the participants and their experiences were not fully representative of or transferable to other groups or situations.
- Bias. Because of subjectivity in how a researcher follows procedures in the research process, his or her bias can negatively affect the research findings. Because I am a woman of color from Jamaica, some participants might not have wished to share their stories outside of their cultural groups and might have viewed me as an outsider or immigrant.

As a researcher, I also faced additional limitations: (a) lack of access—limited access to potential participants due to the type of study, the location (rural Pennsylvania), and the distance from major metropolitan areas with large members of diverse people; and (b) language fluency—gaps in the data collection resulting from some difficulties understanding the accents

and sentence structure of participants who spoke languages other than English as their native tongue.

Summary

Following my interviews with the participants, I submitted the data for electronic analysis and reported the findings in a qualitative format. I wrote a descriptive profile on each participant, telling her story, and then did an integrative summary putting the stories together into themes. A qualitative study can provide depth and greater meaning to the words and actions of the participants involved in the study. I gave careful and scholarly attention to how data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and how findings were presented. The use of phenomenological inquiry to examine the world of grandmothers and their influence on the lives of their granddaughters has important significance for feminist studies on leadership, since it places gender in the forefront of the discourse and provides support for an addition to the canon. In support of the feminist inclusion, Scott (1985) noted that

feminist research is “qualitative research by women ‘on’ women” with a desire to make sense of women’s lives and experiences; it “must take women’s oppression as one of its basic assumptions”; it is research informed at every stage by an acknowledged political commitment. (pp. 69–70).

The choice of this methodological perspective also draws on my commitment to facilitate research that allows participants to express their lived experiences using their own language, normal speech patterns, and nomenclatures.

Analyzing Data and Reporting Findings

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate, using a sample of successful adult women between the ages of 40 and 70, how their grandmothers influenced their lives during their childhood years. I theorized that some grandmothers can be effective leaders, transmitting leadership values to their granddaughters during their critical years—values based on qualities such as integrity, accountability, intentionality, and wisdom. Leadership values such as these can encourage emulation and confidence building in the granddaughters. This influence can be very positive; however, there have been occasions when negative experiences were motivating forces as well, propelling the person experiencing them to strive to become the antithesis of that experience, thereby achieving success in spite of it. An example of this was evident when a colleague informed me that her grandmother, a community leader, was a bigot, racist, and antifeminist. As a granddaughter being exposed to those influences, she was determined never to become like her grandmother—yet she loved her grandmother. This granddaughter grew up and became a feminist and an advocate for equality in spite of her grandmother's ideology and tutelage.

In this chapter I also include a description of participants and their grandmothers, the presentation of major findings and significant factors, a discussion of those findings, an assessment of credibility, and a summary of the chapter. The essential research question was: “How have grandmothers’ interactions and/or relationships with their granddaughters during the formative years influenced the leadership potential and success of their adult granddaughters?” In addition, other questions relevant to the study were:

- What important factors characterize how grandmothers influence granddaughters?

- What were the identifiable leadership qualities of the grandmothers that enabled mentoring/leadership development in the granddaughters?
- How, if at all, did culture or geographical location play a role in the transmission of leadership values?

The Descriptions of the Participants and Their Grandmothers

Presented here are narrative portrayals of the 20 participants, all females.

SC. SC is a 60-year-old woman of Chinese ancestry who was raised by her grandmother in Taiwan. She is fluent in four languages: Chinese, Taiwanese, English, and Japanese. She is a practicing Buddhist who attributes her religion to the influence of her grandmother. At present SC is married, lives in the United States, and is a professor of anthropology. She has taught as a visiting professor in several universities and colleges in the United States. Her areas of expertise are cross-cultural learning and the ancestors' way of learning—the Yin and Yang, manifested in learning, experiencing life through the senses, and recognizing and valuing the importance of the seasons of life.

SC's maternal grandmother was named Xinger, and SC called her grandmother "Popo," a term of endearment. She in turn was called Baba (baby). Xinger was born in 1915, in the spring, and died in 1991. Being born in the spring is a good omen, associated with the goddess of compassion and the reading of the Sutra (holy book). Xinger was born and raised in China, but during the Chinese civil war, she and her family fled China and became refugees in Taiwan. SC's mother wanted to be a career woman and did not want to raise children, so the responsibility of raising SC went to Xinger, who faithfully cared for her grandchildren. They lived in a subsidized housing project in Taiwan while the parents went to live in the city; the mother became an artist and teacher of art and the father joined the military. Xinger cared for the

children, providing stability and protection. She prepared their meals and allowed them to attend school. In winter, she had hot potatoes waiting for them when they returned home. To keep the potatoes warm she wrapped them in several layers of blankets and placed them in the beds, which also kept their beds warm. SC noted that these years were the happiest in her life: “They embodied the whole sense of security and stability.” Grandmother also founded and managed a shelter for animals, and prepared the “ghost money” ritual for the deceased. SC noted that as the children were the “forgotten and discarded children of our parents,” her grandmother made her contributions to be the backbone of her family by giving her grandchildren a better life.

These contributions emerged based on substantiations from the three specific research questions dealing with: influential factors, leadership qualities, and cultural/geographical location.

The expression of love experienced by SC provided stability and security. She grew up and emulated her grandmother’s leadership qualities in several ways: engagement in community service, religious conversion to Buddhism, and resiliency learned from the grandmother’s past experience as a displaced political Taiwanese refugee. These skills and values were observed and later modeled by SC, providing opportunities for her own leadership development.

DP. DP is a college-educated White woman, age 48, who moved from Germany to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, with her husband, who is in the US military, and her high-school-age son. She works from home, online, as a computer engineer. Her husband is a Black American who remained present in the background during the interview session. She has been living in the U.S. for over 15 years. She was a very pleasant and charming host during my visit and on the telephone. She is fluent in English, German, French, and Italian. I understood her very well, and she told me that she understood me as well. Her responses to the research questions lacked depth.

Grandmother was Hildegard, her maternal grandmother. She had eight grandchildren; DP was the first grandchild. The grandparents at one time lived with DP's parents in a big house in the city of Munich for several years. Hildegard, according to DP, "was a free spirit" who had a great relationship with her husband; they did everything together, including cooking, shopping, and gardening. During World War II, Hildegard worked outside the home in a "photo" laboratory. DP noted that her grandmother told her that her act of defiance during the Nazi regime was "she would not salute the monument, if no one was there" as she rode her bike to and from work. Hildegard knew in advance that the Americans were coming to their city, and Hildegard took her family to her brother-in-law's house outside the city; when they returned, their house was gone, destroyed! She packed up the family and left the city.

DP's interview was interesting in that although she wanted to participate in the study, she did not provide the depth of information that I had expected. However, I believe that in time she may choose to share more with someone else. I found the interview disappointing because of the backdrop of Germany's history—history of racism—and the fact that DP is married to a Black man and is now living in the United States. I expected to hear of Hitler's Nazi Germany (Third Reich) from 1933 to 1945 and how her grandmother either opposed or cooperated with the regime. But no such stories were forthcoming. At times I wondered if she understood the questions being asked. The caveat to DP's interview could be that some Germans find it difficult to speak of the role of their parents and grandparents during the Hitler regime. Her reticence could be attributed to knowledge that she has chosen not to share for different reasons. These speculative reasons could be due to any number of factors, such as possible embarrassment about Nazi Germany, or perhaps her grandmother had in some way cooperated with the Nazi party, or the presence of her husband during the interview. I was not able to ascertain any additional

information on the subject. DP's response could also be identified with the social desirability effect, where a participant responds to a question in a manner that she believes would be favorable. As a product of self-reporting, it affects the outcome as this bias interferes with the interpretation.

Contributions. DP's loving relationship with her spouse was developed through the values she gained from observing her grandmother's relationship with her husband. The granddaughter gained confidence to marry and experience a healthy relationship outside her racial group. Like her grandmother, who defied the Nazi regime and whose intuition caused her to move her family out of the city before a foreign invasion during World War II, DP immigrated with her son and husband to a foreign country and established herself within the community. DP's leadership qualities were direct imitations of her grandmother's strength and foresight.

PJ. PJ is a 55-year-old woman who was born to a teenage mother and raised in Jamaica for the first 12 years of her life. She is of Chinese and African descent. "Mama" (Dorcas), her maternal grandmother, was her "savior." Her grandmother was present at her birth and helped to deliver her. For the first 10 years of her life while living with her grandmother's family, she did not realize that her grandmother was not her mother. Her mother had abandoned her. However, at age 12 years, she was sent to live with her mother in England. She lived the rest of her teenage and young adult years with her mother and stepfather. PJ described her life as horrible, abusive, and vastly unhappy, as she was used as a maid and nanny to clean, cook, maintain the household, and care for five younger siblings, the offspring of her mother's new marriage, after her father's death. At 14 she ran away from home and lived for several weeks in the cemetery on her father's tomb. She desperately wanted to be sent back to Jamaica, but Children's Services intervened and returned her home, where she stayed until the age of 17, when she packed and left, never to

return. For many years there was no communication between her and her mother. She was one of those “left behind” children of the great Caribbean migration to England. She is married and does not have children. However, she has four nieces and nephews by a brother and acts as “other” mother to these children. She immigrated to the United States 14 years ago with her husband. She is a trained synthesizer engineer and is a Christian. PJ described her fondest memory as “Christmas time . . . making Christmas cake, ginger beer, and helping with the food preparation.” PJ enjoyed a close and long relationship with Dorcas.

Dorcas, grandmother to PJ, was born in 1913 in Jamaica of African and Native Indian (Arawak) descent. She had an elementary education but supported the education of her children and grandchildren. She was an ardent reader, especially of the daily newspaper, *The Gleaner*. She had 10 children and “many, many” grandchildren. They lived in a “tenement yard” which they owned in Kingston. Dorcas’s home was the center of activities as she provided care and support of myriads of family members and friends moving to the city of Kingston for a better life. There were always “family” staying for weeks or days “until they could get on their feet.” This “tenement yard” provided a source of income for the family. Dorcas was a leader in her community, a very political person; she supported one of the parties and used her home as a polling station during elections. PJ described her as “helper, uplifter,” caring for all children, being a personal advisor and mentor to other young women. Dorcas’s home was the first household in the community to have a television set and the indoor convenience of a large refrigerator and icemaker, from which she sold ice to her neighbors. She raised chickens, sold eggs, and kept a vegetable garden.

Contributions. PJ’s ability to persevere, especially during her early years in England, helped her to develop leadership skills that were directly linked to her grandmother’s investment

in developing her potential. She emulated the leadership skills which she observed in her grandmother: working to provide additional income for the family, she cooks, bakes, and sells her goods to her neighbors. PJ imitated the leadership qualities of her grandmother, including being an active member of her community and helping other family members when in need. The stability of life in Jamaica fostered an environment for PJ to emulate her grandmother's activism later in her own life.

MP. MP is a college-educated, 54-year-old White female from Bosnia who lives in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. She is married, with young adult children, and came to the USA as a refugee with her family following the Balkan War. Although she was a school psychologist in Bosnia, she works here as a teaching assistant for special-needs children. MP believes in the empowerment of women and is very active in providing economic and technical support to women in Bosnia. She has travelled there for the past three years to engage in peace-building projects with folk dance groups and women's groups. MP is fluent in the Bosnian and English languages. MP's earliest memory of her grandmother was helping to harvest vegetables in summer.

"Baba" (Anna) MP's maternal grandmother, lived on a mountain in central Bosnia, 60 miles from Sarajevo, the country's capital. Religion played an important role in their lives as the grandchildren would visit Baba's house every Sunday after church. Baba had 18 grandchildren and was not educated, so therefore she did not read traditional bedtime stories to her grandchildren; however, she did practical things like baking their favorite yogurt potato bread. Baba also lived very close to MP's school while she was growing up and sometimes would go there to eat with her granddaughter. MP felt well loved by Baba. In turn MP was required to go and help her grandmother whenever she was needed, in the garden or otherwise. MP identified

her Baba's industry and self-sacrifice: "she had a rough life, raising kids, taking care of the land and caring for her husband." MP noted that Baba, although not educated herself, respected and knew the value of education. She would leave money in books like the Bible, and she sold her produce to help fund MP's education. MP also noted that she could not remember her Baba saying "I love you." But she knew that Baba cared very much. Also, in different ways Baba helped others in their community. MP noted that now she does many of the things her grandmother did, such as cooking and caring for her home and family; "when I cook potatoes, it reminds me of grandmother and how much she cared for me."

Contributions. MP learned the importance and value of education from her grandmother who herself did not have much education. This respect for education was passed on to MP who transmitted this same respect to her children. MP learned industry and self-sacrifice, which stood her well when she immigrated to the United States. The Bosnian culture and geographical location (Eastern Europe) played an important role in the complete development of MP's leadership development as she learned tenacity and determination from her grandmother who survived a harsh life and several wars in Bosnia.

MMG. At 40 years old, MMG is the youngest participant, an African American, born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. MMG is married, with no children. She is college educated and considers herself a success, with interests in women's issues, diversity, intergenerational affairs, and student development. MMG was raised by her grandmother and is the first in her family to attend and graduate from college. She gives all credit for her success to her paternal grandmother, whom she loves dearly. She now lives in a college town in South Central Pennsylvania. She mentors, supports and is an advocate for students, especially the underserved and underrepresented populations. She enjoys cooking and also hosting students at her home.

“Ma,” MMG’s grandmother, named Myra, had nine grandchildren, of whom MMG was the eldest. Ma is an African American female who lived in Baltimore City all her life. Ma worked hard both at home and at her job as custodian of a local elementary school. A devout Christian, she left the Catholic Church when she decided that she did not need “a father or priest” to talk to God on her behalf; she was quite capable of praying to God herself. Ma kept a strict household: no cursing, hanging out on the streets, or rude behavior were tolerated. They all went to church on Sundays and other days of the week. Ma also helped clean the church and helped in other capacities, such as ushering, “doing the Lord’s work.” She is a good cook. Because MMG was the offspring of teenage parents (her mother was 13 and her father 16), her mother’s parents advised her mother to give her up for adoption when she was born. Unbeknownst to Ma, MMG was adopted by a White family, with whom she lived for several weeks. When Ma found out about the adoption, she petitioned the courts and MMG was taken from the family and given to Ma, who raised her along with her other children. Ma was very protective of MMG and would take her with her to work rather than leave her alone at home. Certain smells evoke loving memories for MMG, such as eating chicken box lunches with Ma when they were finished cleaning the schools; also the smell of the curl activator. Ma always wore Jheri Curls and gel in her hair. To protect MMG from the harsh streets of Baltimore, Ma insisted that her granddaughter volunteer in nonprofit agencies, from which she developed civil responsibility and the ideal of giving back to the community. These actions helped to prepare MMG for active campus involvement when she went to college.

Contributions. The protection, love, and security experienced by MMG enabled her to develop to her full potential. She emulated leadership qualities such as civic responsibility, intuitiveness, and discipline from her grandmother. The cultural location of inner-city Baltimore

provided challenges that strengthened her resolve to set her sights high and achieve goals in spite of her dire surroundings.

RMD. RMD is an American who identifies herself as a woman of color (African American). She is college educated, in her mid-sixties, and lives in the fruit belt, just north of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. She practices Buddhism and is a copy editor and organizer by profession. RMD facilitated courses in diversity and team development for nonprofits and business corporations. She has planned, organized, and overseen numerous small-scale and large-scale events; served as director of admissions for a private high school, and worked as a corporate secretary. In addition she has served as a regional board member and officer for the Girl Scouts. As a copy editor she has edited thirty-three books for various publishing houses. She is the organizer of “Speaking Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address,” a project to encourage memorization of the great speech.

RMD’s grandmother, Katherine, called “Nana,” lived in Camden, New Jersey, during the 1950s. She had seven grandchildren; RMD was the fifth grandchild. Nana never remarried after the death of her husband and raised her young children on her own while working as a domestic servant. She had both courage and strength. In her later years, she worked part-time out of the home. Significantly, she was a community organizer who registered people to vote and won an award from the NAACP for her community involvement. She loved her many indoor plants and kept an immaculate home. In the summer she worked behind the counter at the community pool, where her grandchildren would come to play and enjoy the water.

Contributions. RMD was deeply influenced by how her grandmother supported herself financially by working outside the home. The Civil Rights movement also influenced dynamics at home and in society. RMD also worked to help with household finances. She observed and

imitated her grandmother's leadership skills such as activism, cultural awareness, and engagement in local politics to help create a more egalitarian society.

RR. RR lives on the outskirts of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and is a medical doctor who practices the Muslim faith. RR is married, with young adult children, and speaks several languages. She is Indian, in her late 50s, and has lived in Pakistan, England, and Uganda. RR works at the local hospital, is an advocate for Muslim students, supports cross-cultural events, and helps to educate the community about the Muslim religion and way of life.

RR's paternal grandmother (Aziz) was from a small village in central India just outside of New Delhi. Grandmother was called "Dadi Amma," and RR was called "Baby." Dadi Amma had 30 grandchildren, and RR was the youngest. RR connected with Dadi Amma during the mid-1950s when her grandmother was about 60 years old. Grandmother was a teacher who was paid by the government to teach children how to read Arabic and the Quran. These classes were held inside her home. In a time when girls were not sent to school, she taught the young girls in the community how to read and write. She was a just person, and the neighbors often would call her to settle disputes. The community called her "Ammaji" (dear mother). She was very pious but always accepting of others' views. In 1947 during the India-Pakistan war, when India became two countries, Dadi Amma's son moved from India to Pakistan. She never prevented him from going, although he was moving away from the family. She encouraged him to follow his dreams.

Contributions. RR was influenced by her grandmother's activism and support of women's rights and gender equality. RR was also impressed with her grandmother's activism and the role she played in teaching young girls to read and write when such actions were discouraged in her culture. The culture and geographical location for women in New Delhi,

India, perpetuated and advanced anti-women laws. Observing and benefitting from her grandmother's activism, RR parlayed her education and became a medical doctor. Following in the steps of her grandmother, she continues to use her education and status to help motivate and educate women not only about their health, but in "finding their voices" in their culture.

SIS. SIS is a 43-year-old college-educated American of Haitian descent. She speaks Creole, French, and English. She is Christian, works for the Federal Government in the Office of Education, and lives in Washington, District of Columbia. SIS is married and the mother of three children. She is a native New Yorker who spent her formative years in Port au Prince, Haiti. She too was left behind when her parents sought a better life in the United States.

Her maternal grandmother, Ann, called "Grandlar," was born in 1921, in Haiti. A devout Catholic, she had three grandchildren, with SIS being the oldest. She immigrated to the United States and lived in upstate New York. She was institutionalized in a mental health facility for a number of years but later became an astute business woman, in spite of having only an elementary education. Her lack of formal education did not hinder her. She was self-taught in finance and could hold her own on many topics in any business or social circle. She had a "presence" when she came into a room. She was called "Grandmother of Gold" because she would light up a room when she entered.

Contributions. SIS observed her grandmother providing help and support to members of her community. She imitated leadership qualities such as fiscal management and an entrepreneurial spirit. Using the skills she learned from her grandmother, she developed tenacity, resiliency, and confidence. Through her grandmother's influence, she learned the value of her Haitian roots, with its rich historical, cultural, and geographical significance, which she passes on to her children.

TB. TB is a White, Jewish, college professor with a Ph.D. from Temple University. She teaches courses on women writers, gender, and sexuality, with expertise and interest in issues dealing with immigration. She is in her 70s, married, with adult children. An activist, she is involved in community work with her husband. She was born and raised in Philadelphia, an area in which her family has lived for several generations.

TB's Jewish grandmother (Fanny) emigrated from Austria to the United States in the mid-1930s (the depression years), and the family members who followed later all made Philadelphia their home. Grandmother had her children late in life, and her daughter, TB's mother, also had her children later in life. Grandmother had four daughters: three of them worked outside the home (one ran her own business), while TB's mom was a homemaker. From them she learned that she had options in life. They were all strong women in different ways. TB heard stories from grandmother of Jews being murdered and raped in the ghettos of Europe. Also, there were stories of family members serving in the army and how terrible it was for the Jews. Grandmother and her family were not religious, but there were memories of candles and sitting Shiva. However, TB noted, "Grandmother was very old when I was growing up." Even at a very old age, she was strong and determined. She insisted on helping with the cooking of meals. TB mentioned that grandmother had courage to have left her homeland so far away and then to be accused as an immigrant of "mongrelizing the Aryan race" in America. She is very pleased that members of her family named their daughters after her, in honor of coming to the United States.

Contributions. TB discovered that her grandmother was courageous, strong, and determined; because of these qualities, TB was influenced to teach classes in Women's Studies. She emulated and respected the pioneering spirit of her grandmother, who left home in Austria to

begin a new life in the U.S. TB emulated such leadership qualities as a pioneering spirit and being a visionary. She became an early advocate for women and helped to develop courses that embraced and recognized the leadership value of women. Her course on immigration is a tribute to the vision and tenacity of her grandmother's journey to the U.S.

LV. LV lives in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. She is a mother of adult children and a grandmother. She emigrated from India to the U.S. in the mid-1960s with her husband, a doctor. She worked as an office manager in her husband's practice and also worked as a night auditor at a local hotel. When her children were growing up, she stayed at home with them. She is in her early 70s and has lived a life surrounded by icons of her faith. She is very active in several local organizations dealing with women and community issues. She is a vegetarian who practices the Hindu religion.

LV's maternal grandmother, Vithri, called "Abbah," was born in south India, in the city of Chennai (Madras), a major commercial, cultural, and educational center. She had four children, three boys and one girl. Abbah was married in the Hindu tradition of arranged marriage, at age nine. Widowed within three years, she was an outcast the rest of her life. According to tradition, after the marriage ceremony, she would remain with her family until she became of age during her teens. Her childhood husband also continued to live with his family. Disaster struck, and her husband died within a few years. She was marked, labeled, and denounced as a bad omen, and for the rest of her life was required to wear black or dark brown clothes, never to remarry or have children. She was seen as an evil curse by the community. Her head was shaved and she was kept away from public view. As a widow she was required to move in with her husband's parents, who despised her and blamed her for the death of their young son. She was depressed and wanted to kill herself. Taking the condition of her life as fate,

and as a member of the Brahmin caste (priestly status), she was able to move away to another city when she became an adult; she adopted her sister's children. She did not beg or starve but became a servant, washing, cooking, and cleaning for others. Grandmother's house had a dirt floor with no electricity, and during the monsoon, the place was flooded. Grandmother eventually had servants of her own and moved into a big house. Unschooled and illiterate, grandmother learned to read when granddaughter LV taught her many years later. LV saw her grandmother as brave and courageous, a survivor, someone who against the odds and discrimination became an entrepreneur, owning her own catering business and providing jobs for others. Yet she was still not allowed in front of people because she had a widow's face. For Hindus, widows are considered bad luck, are required to wear clothing of dark colors, and as punishment for causing the death of their husbands are not allowed to participate in family celebrations.

Contributions. LV was influenced by her grandmother's bravery, courage, and tenacity. Her grandmother's survival skills and later entrepreneurial skills were modeled by LV, who partnered with her husband, a doctor, to build a successful medical practice in Gettysburg, far from south India. Her leadership skills were evident in employment of staff, supervision, and management of all the financial aspects of the business. Her creativity and vision were employed as she became engaged in the NAACP and local organizations that helped women and children. Her cultural background and geographical locations were important to her leadership development because she was able to draw from those influences, helping to break down barriers and challenging cultural biases as she became immersed in the local community in which she lives.

GL. GL is college educated, White, and of Russian ancestry, born in 1958 in the southern Ural Mountains. She graduated from the state university at Minsk, Belarus, majoring in mathematics. She has worked as a ski sport coach and as a software engineer. She immigrated to the United States after marrying her husband, a retired pilot. She teaches Russian and has twin college-age sons. She lives in the outskirts of Gettysburg, on a farmette, where she and her husband run the family excavating business. An ardent advocate for preserving the Gettysburg community as sacred ground, she became involved in the “No Casino Gettysburg” campaign. She donates to and volunteers for various programs at the local YMCA and participates in 5K running events.

GL’s grandmother, Varvara, was called “Bulia” by her seven grandchildren. Bulia had three daughters and one son. She was born in southern Russia, a simple woman, very strong, yet very feminine. She was family oriented and loved to cook, knit, sew, garden, and read. Bulia lost her husband during WWII and survived starvation and much hardship when the war ended. As a seamstress, she sewed clothing for GL during her growing-up years. Easter season was special, with decorative egg painting and lots of baking, skills which GL learned from her grandmother. She instilled discipline in the lives of her grandchildren: they were required to obey the daily schedule and do chores. She also passed on values such as honesty, service to community, cleanliness, kindness, and helpfulness.

Contributions. GL absorbed influential qualities such as being family oriented and learned the positive value of a disciplined life. She observed and emulated leadership skills such as surviving in the midst of hardship and being diligent and hardworking. These survival skills helped her as she settled in a foreign land with her husband and sons. The cultural and geographical effects of living in southern Russia during WWII helped to shape the tenacity of the

grandmother, and these values also helped to shape how GL lives her life today, facing the challenges of the American society while engaging in political issues.

CM. CM was born in Jamaica but grew up in Brooklyn from age 12 to adult. She was also a “left behind” child of Jamaican descent. She is college educated, a registered nurse, who was the first in her family to attend college. CM is a stay-at-home mother with two elementary school-age boys, five and nine years old. At 45 years old, she is an astute business woman who invested well in real estate in New York City and Brooklyn. Previously, she worked in several hospitals and clinics in NYC alongside her husband, an anesthesiologist. An engaged parent and community school member, she has won awards for her contributions and volunteerism in her Chelsea community in NYC. She is involved in feeding the homeless in the city and in making the school community a safe and healthy place for children and teachers. She writes for the local community-based paper and is an advocate for and representative of the renewal and sustainability of her community. CM credits her grandmother for who she is today.

Grandmother, Adlyn, was maternal grandmother to CM. She was born in 1910 in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. Called “Mama” by her children and grandchildren, she helped to raise three of her granddaughters, including CM. She raised CM from birth to age 12 years when she emigrated to the U.S. to join her parents. Grandmother did not have much education; however, she instilled in her granddaughters such values as kindness, thrift, and love of family. And while she believed in God and discussed Bible stories, she never forced her granddaughter to accept any religious beliefs. The stories were used to discuss right and wrong and how to live. CM described her grandmother as elegant, bright, and witty, someone who “moved through life with fearless grace and courage.” She instructed her granddaughter to always be “groomed and well put together and always wear clean underwear (preferably, without holes), because if you fell

down on the streets . . . and had holes in your underwear, people would laugh at you.” CM noted that they were desperately poor, but she never knew it because her grandmother always had a cheerful disposition.

Contributions. CM was influenced by her grandmother’s “fearless grace and courage” and by her cheerful disposition that affected CM’s ability to endure a less-than-perfect childhood and to gain confidence in knowing that she could face life challenges. She had faith in her abilities to realize her potentials. She embraced her grandmother as a role model and disciplined herself to achieve her goals. Being raised in a culturally diverse society, Jamaica, with its proximity to the U.S., CM was exposed to the possibilities of an enriched life.

AP. AP was born and raised in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. She is 55 years old, has some college education, and presently works as administrative support staff at a small college in South Central Pennsylvania. AP is of African American and Puerto Rican descent, with deep family roots in Gettysburg going back to some of the earliest Black citizens in the area. Her great grandfather, a Black man, was the first teacher of the segregated one-room school for Black children in Gettysburg. AP is divorced and the mother of two adult sons. Like most members of her prominent family, AP is well known in the community. AP noted that her family produced strong women, including her grandmother, “Grandma H,” and the role of women in the family was that of both mother and father.

Grandma Hazel was born and raised in Gettysburg, also. She was a Christian, born April 16, 1910, and died in February 1996. She was called “Sunflower” by family members because of her skin tone, very dark hair, a twinkle in her eyes, and rosy cheeks. She had 19 grandchildren, of whom AP was number eight. Grandma H grew up in segregated Gettysburg, where the only employment available to Black women was housekeeping or being a nanny to wealthy White

citizens. A Black person could eat only in the kitchen of a restaurant, but only in certain restaurants. Also, there was only one barber shop that would cut the hair of Black people in town. Grandma H always smelled of wintergreen gum and carried tissues in her pocket. All her dresses had pockets. She was very industrious and could use a hammer as well as a push mower to mow the local Black cemetery. She saw this act as caring for her loved ones' resting place. She was a "doer," getting things done without being asked. A religious person, with a melodious voice, she sang in her church choir. Grandma H did not show her affection, yet AP knew that she was loved because Grandma H helped to take care of her grandchildren. An influential and respected matriarch of her family, she reserved Sundays for church, prayer, and family gatherings.

Contributions. AP's leadership development was influenced by her grandmother's role as matriarch of her family, a role that was evident in qualities such as industry, faith, and love of family. AP emulated her grandmother's industry, hard work, and perseverance. The geographical location of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, promoted cultural ambiguity and challenged the growth of her potential; nevertheless, due to the resiliency and tenacity that she learned from her grandmother, she was able to rise above the negativity and embrace her vision for a better life.

SS. SS, college educated, a Ph.D., in her mid-50s, is of Native American descent and an adjunct assistant professor at a local college. She worked as director of the Women's Center and teaches courses in Women, Sexuality and Gender, and Interdisciplinary Studies. As an advocate for women's rights, she is herself a biological and spiritual grandmother to many people. A published author, her first published poem was "Remembering Viola," a tribute to her grandmother.

SS's maternal great-grandmother, Viola, was Native American and was called "Grandma." She was in her 70s while SS was growing up. She had nine grandchildren, with SS being the first great-grandchild. Grandma had a farm with fruit and flower gardens. She had a deep love of plants and nature in general. REB's life was affected by women's suffrage and WWII. SS noted that Grandma "was married to the town's chairman of the board of the bank, but she was a 'country woman' who plowed with a team of mules, grew her own food, and rejected elitism as shallowness." Viola had a close relationship to the earth and adored her great-granddaughter. SS spent 11 years with her great-grandmother, who was influential in shaping the lives of people, plants, and animals that she cared about. She refused to conform to the social hierarchy/classism of her era and the expectations of women. She was very influential in the life of SS, who assimilated her values, such as "upholding one's personal beliefs in the face of societal expectation." Although a banker's wife, she made her own clothes, cared for abandoned animals, and was proud of her tanned arms and calloused hands from working her farm.

Contributions. SS was influenced by her great-grandmother's involvement in and advocacy for the rights of women and girls, and her support of Women's Suffrage. Her uncompromised values and leadership qualities—tenacity, activism, and moral strength—were modeled by SS. Adopting those qualities of tenacity and activism helped her to embrace and forge her own path as a professor in Women's Studies. The geographical location in rural Pennsylvania during WWII and the lack of cultural diversity were fodder for minimizing the leadership values of women. SS, however, held on to her grandmother's vision and helped to change the landscape for women.

TBo. TBo, British by birth and of African descent, works for a British government agency in management and health care. She is a global citizen who has lived in the United States and is 45 years old. She is unmarried but has a partner with whom she shares a home. TBo is college educated and deeply loved her grandmother. She lived with grandmother from birth to four years, and then from age 11 to 22 years.

TBo's grandmother, Muriel, fondly called "Granny," is her maternal grandmother. Granny was born February 1, 1923, in Westmoreland, Jamaica. Granny had 10 grandchildren, TBo being her first grandchild. Granny was considered the head of the family. She was well liked and respected. She left her homeland and prepared the way for a better life for her family by going to England and bringing them there. She was not well educated, but she instilled in her children the importance of getting a good education so they would not have to work in a factory, or work as hard as she did. Her church was her foundation; she took TBo to church each Sunday. Granny was deeply involved, helping with community activities but never engaging in political issues. She was always well dressed for the occasion: matching hat, gloves, shoes, and handbags. Special clothes were reserved to be worn only on Sundays. Granny would say, "A woman must not go into the house of the Lord without her head being covered. But someone should not let that stop them from going to church." She would say, "A woman must always carry a handbag when she is going out as this is a sign that she is a lady." Granny read her Bible to TBo every night; and when TBo was old enough, she read the Bible to Granny, who taught TBo the Lord's Prayer, how to pray, and how to say grace at the table. Granny taught TBo how to cook, clean, wash, and iron. Granny was not very educated, but she instilled good values in her granddaughter, especially the importance of church, school, and family.

Contributions. TBo was influenced by her grandmother, the matriarch's faith, love of family, and commitment to education. She emulated her grandmother's leadership qualities such as community engagement and a strong work ethic. The geographical location of central England was rich in diverse cultures, populated by the influx of immigrants from various global places. This cultural mix enabled the rise of diverse leadership models. With the guidance of her grandmother, TBo's creativity, confidence, and vision flourished in this arena.

MF. MF is 63, college educated, and works as assistant provost at a small liberal arts college in Pennsylvania. An American, White Anglo-Saxon Catholic, she is unmarried and shares her home with her beloved dog. She was born in New York City, adopted, and raised on the eastern end of Long Island. She has worked in several areas of Student Affairs at different colleges and as an adjunct professor at her alma mater in upstate New York.

MF's maternal grandmother, Elizabeth, was called "Nana." She was born in Wallkill, New York, and during MF's childhood in the decade of the 1960s, she lived four hours away in Orange County. Nana would read Dick Tracy comic strips to MF when she was around four years old. When MF's father died and her mother was not sure she could afford to send her to college, grandmother had very little money in savings but offered to help pay for MF's college that fall. She was Irish Catholic and very religious. Her religion was a way of life for her; her meals, religious holidays, and Sundays revolved around Mass. Grandmother loved to garden and taught MF how to plant. Every evening the grandparents would go into their kitchen, close the doors, and say the rosary. Being a devout Catholic meant no meat on Friday; instead she would prepare her famous salmon loaf. She never discussed politics. She was a homebody, quiet and unassuming, devoted to her husband, daughter, and God. She had patience and was generous, a

plain person who had no need for luxuries. She passed on to MF a love of mysteries through her reading of Dick Tracy comics, and a love of nature through gardening.

Contributions. MF was influenced by her grandmother's faith, quiet and unassuming nature, and her love of mysteries. She emulated the leadership skills of household management, fiscal responsibility, and self-discipline, which helped her manage her life as a single person. The geographical location of Wallkill, New York, a rural area, provided an agricultural culture that supported MF in developing skills such as patience, endurance, and foresight, which helped her as she moved to various places during her career.

JB. JB is college educated and the mother of two young boys, ten and eight years old. She is a White American with northern European roots from Sweden, Demark, England, and Norway. She highly values her relation with God and family. At age 40, she lives in Hanover, Pennsylvania. She is an avid reader and writes articles for Christian magazines as well as writing books and children stories. She is an experienced cake decorator. JB is a happily married homemaker. A Christian, she volunteers for several positions in her home church, including treasurer for the church school. She was raised in Michigan, Tennessee, and Florida and has lived in many places in the U.S.

JB's maternal grandmother is Alice, affectionately called "Grandma." She had five children. Alice was born in Battle Creek, Michigan, and spent her life there until moving to Florida in 1989. Alice experienced WWII with her husband. She travelled within the U.S. and Canada to stay close to her husband, who was later shipped to the Pacific. She had eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, with JB being the second granddaughter. Grandma encouraged JB in her faith and taught her how to be forgiving and hospitable. She loved having people over after church. She kept a garden and canned, juiced, froze, and preserved fruits and

vegetables. JB learned the importance of being prepared for the unexpected and just how to love in a slightly different way than she learned from her parents. Grandma was a Sabbath-keeper and kept her family together by celebrating and hosting “special meals on Sabbath.” She enjoyed putting puzzles together, a pastime JB now enjoys. Grandma was an Adventist and passed on Adventist and farming cultures. Alice taught JB that work isn’t a bad thing and that you can choose to make it fun or at least find some enjoyment in it if you try. Alice was a homemaker who endured a bad marriage, leading to an example of inverse influence. A qualitative study of the grandmother-granddaughter dyad can unearth evidence of this inverse influence as noted with JB whose grandmother’s bad marriage influenced her to be more cautious and selective when she chose a husband for marriage. She is now happily married in spite of the negativity of her grandmother’s relationship with her husband.

Contributions. JB was influenced by her grandmother’s faith, acts of forgiveness, hospitality, and industriousness. She emulated such leadership qualities as self-reliance, being self-employed, and the skill of being prepared for the unexpected. JB modeled those qualities in her own life. As a homemaker, she grows, cans, and sells her products. She participates in the survivalist plan of storing supplies and preparing for natural as well as man-made disasters in the future. The geographical location and spiritual culture of Battle Creek, Michigan, help support these strategies that are deeply associated with their faith.

ABL. ABL, American, White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, 68 years old, is the college-educated mother of three and grandmother of six who range in age from 18 to five. She works as an associate dean at a local college in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and lives on secluded acres in northern Adams County with her husband and her 98-year-old mother. She has worked at this college for 33 years as an administrator and instructor. From her grandmother and mother,

she developed a love of music, gardening, and nature. Her hope for the world is peace, social justice, health care for all, and environmental sanity.

ABL's maternal grandmother, Mary Ellen, was called "Mayme." She had five brothers and four children of her own, three girls and a boy. Mary Ellen was born in New Oxford, Pennsylvania. Mayme raised her children during the Great Depression. She was a milliner by trade, and money was scarce, so she made all the clothing for the family; she used feed sacks to make dresses for the girls, as was common in those days. Food was scarce, too. ABL's mother recalled as a child that when the entire family was ill with the flu in 1918, a kind neighbor came across the field with a chicken for them. She still recalls the wonderful smell of the chicken broth. Grandmother went to live with ABL's family before ABL was born. She always had a presence in the home, was reserved and quiet, but maintained a steady and faithful friend of her childhood all her life. Genteel and cultured, she played the piano and also played the organ at a little Methodist chapel near their home. She made certain that her children went to church, and she sacrificed to make sure they all had piano lessons. As she got older, she developed neuritis in her right hand and could play with only two fingers on that hand, but play she did! Grandmother passed on her love of literature and music. When oranges were in season, grandma would go to the kitchen early, make fresh-squeezed orange juice, and leave a glass on the counter top for ABL's breakfast. She baked wonderful pies and was an amazing cook. She loved gardening and all things beautiful and nourishing. Grandma was a Christian and she taught her children and granddaughter what was good and right, to treat people—all people—with respect.

Contributions. Industry, faith, love of music and literature were influential factors that supported ABL's leadership development. She modeled her grandmother's innovation and intuitiveness. The small-town geographical location of New Oxford, Pennsylvania, and its lack

of cultural inclusiveness were factors that propelled ABL to use her education to promote a more inclusive society. She adopted a biracial son and through her role as an educator at a college, she uses innovative strategies to engage students. Through her faith and love of music, she became a member of a choir that provides music to a cross-section of the community.

TA. TA, born in Ghana, West Africa, is college educated, an obstetrician-gynecologist who practices at the local hospital. She supports women's groups and advocates for women's sexual health. She works with mothers and the health care system to ensure health education in families. A Ghanaian, she speaks three languages: English, French, and her native dialect. At present she lives with her husband and four teenage/young adult children on the outskirts of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

TA's paternal grandmother was Josephine, called "Granny" by her 14 grandchildren. She was born in Esiam, Ghana. TA's father was an only child but had 14 children from three wives. Her father died when she was three years old. But after he died at such an early age through a car accident, Granny kept all the grandchildren together and provided for them. Even though she was semi-illiterate, she was a strong proponent for education and ensured that they were all well educated. She was a very caring and loving but tough lady who took care of eight grandsons and six granddaughters who became the envy of people in town. Before TA went away to high school, Granny woke her up at dawn and advised her to hold on to the values she had instilled in her: work hard to achieve her dreams and to control her temper. Granny raised the children as Catholics, and Sundays were special. It was the day of the week where apart from going to church, there was less activity in the house. It was also the day when they had special lunches and fun activities. TA's father had been a philanthropist, and after his passing Granny contributed to the church and also to the improvement of the town's amenities.

Contributions. TA's love of family, deep faith, industry, and education were greatly influenced by her grandmother. She emulated such qualities as insight, commitment, vision, and confidence. These leadership development skills enabled her to gain the confidence and commitment necessary to become a doctor in the U.S. Her early development and cultural exposure in Ghana, West Africa, were mentored by her grandmother, from whom she learned to set goals and to aspire to an education that would provide her a good future as she helps others in her community.

MG. MG, with only an elementary school education, has limited fluency in the English language. She is Christian by religion and was born in central Mexico. At 50 years old, she has lived in the orchards in Adams County, in South Central Pennsylvania, for 13 years. Her family lives in a small house among the fruit trees; the home is owned by the farmer. She is a homemaker who supports her husband's work, which involves planting, tending, and harvesting fruits grown in the area: apples and cherries. She is married, with two teenage daughters. During the academic year, her daughters attend the local public high school. Both daughters are fluent in English, so they translate for their mother.

MG's grandmother was Marguerita, who lived in central Mexico with MG's family and helped to raise the children. She would prepare them for school and cook breakfast. Although she was not educated, she knew the value of education and would have a hot meal ready for the grandchildren when they returned home from school in the late afternoon. MG's favorite snack was chocolate with bread. Grandmother was an excellent cook, and she would cook chicken in red sauce, a food served on special occasions; but she cooked it "for no special celebration." Grandmother encouraged MG to come to the U.S. to find a better life for the family. A devout Catholic, Marguerita, who is still alive, attends Mass weekly and prays for guidance of her

family and grandchildren. She would take MG to Mass, also. To help with the family finances, grandmother would sell milk, cheese, chickens, eggs, and vegetables from the garden. MG was expected to help with the gathering of the eggs and picking of fruits and vegetables. She knew that grandmother loved her; MG helped her with chores after school. Marguerita encouraged MG to do her homework and love school as it was one way to have an easier and better life.

Contributions. MG was influenced by such factors as love of family, thrift, and industry of her grandmother. She now exemplifies leadership qualities such as commitment, creativity, steadfastness, and self-discipline, which she modeled from her grandmother. A culture of thrift and hard work have enabled her to draw from the examples of her grandmother's leadership experiences as she creates a home for her family in the U.S.

Presentation of Analysis and Emerging Themes

As stated earlier, the essential research question of this study is, "How have grandmothers' interactions and/or relationships with their granddaughters during the formative years influenced the leadership potential and success of their adult granddaughters?" Additional questions relevant to the study are:

- What important factors characterize how grandmothers influence granddaughters?
- What are the identifiable leadership qualities of the grandmothers that enable mentoring/leadership development in their granddaughters?
- How does culture or geographical location influence leadership transmission from grandmother to granddaughter?

I have grouped the findings in each area to provide a comprehensive and diverse collection of essential statements pertaining to the question. Leadership is defined through words and actions, providing tools for various experiences and bringing order to chaos. Through the

voices of the granddaughters, one learns that grandmothers provided structure and positioned themselves as leaders whose actions helped their granddaughters survive to adulthood and become successful leaders themselves. The following traits associated with leadership have emerged in my readings and my experience with women leaders: the ability to

- organize,
- manage,
- plan,
- delegate,
- mentor/coach/nurture,
- strategize,
- envision the future,
- take risks,
- build confidence,
- create/innovate,
- command,
- support, and
- provide opportunities for growth and development.

The granddaughters' leadership qualities were developed through the actions and mentorship of the grandmothers, who were a diverse group of women from across different decades representing periods in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, when women were considered inferior and subordinate in many ways. With little or no education of their own, yet without planned intentions, they helped to break down barriers: they challenged the status quo, supported the education and welfare of their granddaughters, and took risks. They were

domestics, homemakers, factory workers, laborers, and casual workers; they cooked, cleaned, sewed, gardened, were day workers, and performed household chores. The grandmothers represented a diverse cross-cultural group from many different nationalities as well as the U.S. The grandmothers, as identified by granddaughters, were from the following places: Austria (two), Russia, China-Taiwan, Mexico, Jamaica (two), England, Germany, Ghana, India, Bosnia, Pakistan, Haiti, and the United States: Maryland, New Jersey, South Central Pennsylvania (three) and New York.

The Discussion

This discussion will provide the findings and the details that support them. At the start of this study, I wanted to find out from successful adult women whether their grandmothers had influenced their successes as adults. If yes, I wanted to document the stories and lived experiences of these granddaughters. It was important for the participants to share their stories in their own voices, in order to further clarify and shape the study.

Finding 1: All the grandmothers of the participants took active roles in care and protection of their granddaughters. The analysis and synthesis resulted in an extensive description of the essence of care as given by the grandmothers. Care is visible in satisfying the basic human needs: food, shelter, and clothing, in addition to emotional and psychological needs. The use of the word “care” brings images to mind of the acts of grandmothers who offered protection and provided nutrition. They are portrayed as providing for the physical body as well as for emotional well-being; both grandmother and granddaughter are appreciated as special entities. In a symbiotic caring relationship, as mentioned by Buber (1965), “Every human being needs confirmation” (p. 71). Demonstrated acts of caring by the grandmothers significantly impacted their granddaughters, thereby providing the foundation for an unintended consequence

of building self-esteem and the transferring of leadership qualities to the granddaughters, as attested by them in their statements. Leadership is about relationship (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) and is a learned art; exemplary leaders care. These granddaughters experienced care given by their grandmothers. The participants noted:

My grandma's life . . . her job or she took it upon herself is the nanny for all of the three of us, plus other kids in the neighborhood. So, for instance, you know together to get our afternoon after school snack maybe: her task and then that is the time that the sensory memories start to come. Right? Grandma was the one who was very clever about how children should have snacks . . . ? So there is always something homemade, chilled and ready and waiting for you and so it's, it's that pleasure. Right? (SC)

So they had plenty of room . . . so I spent a lot of time with them . . . always bought me something nice. You know, always made me feel special . . . bananas (laughter) . . . they came from her . . . so it's special . . . that's what she brought. . . . It makes me feel good . . . felt really loved. (DP)

Because my mother was not there when I was a little girl. When I was born, my mother went to England so my grandmother had the full responsibility to grow me [sic] as one of her own children. Though at the age of 12, I realized that my grandmother was not my mother . . . she was my Mama. (PJ)

In my childhood . . . she was kind of a major person . . . she always left money for me in some old book, like the Bible. (MP)

My maternal grandmother took it upon themselves (at birth) to give me up for adoption . . . once my (paternal) grandmother found out, she went to . . . to find out where I was so that she could adopt me. (MMG)

Just her always being around, always being loving . . . being available and being able to give you basically whatever it is you wanted. (SIS)

My father was an only child with 14 children and 3 wives. He died at an early age . . . granny kept us all together and provided for us. (TA)

So, she took care of the cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children and everything . . . used to take good care of me . . . I could be the president of the United States, according to her I could do anything and everything which gave me a lot of confidence. She pushed me and no matter who said what, I was the most beautiful, most intelligent, most everything. (LV)

Finding 2: The granddaughters identified leadership qualities in their grandmothers, enabling their own leadership development. The grandmothers demonstrated a spectrum of identifiable leadership qualities: courage, persistence, vision, strength, entrepreneurial spirit, survival skills, and fiscal responsibility, in addition to understanding the times in which they lived (the Great Depression, civil wars, World War II, and the American Civil Rights Movement). The grandmothers' courage and persistence were invaluable characteristics that were stated repeatedly throughout the granddaughters' discourses. Some grandmothers were visionary, having the capability to foresee future issues such as the need to be frugal and save. Their entrepreneurial spirits and survival skills provided valuable resources and challenged the notion of who is considered a leader. The granddaughters learned from the entrepreneurial spirit and fiscal independence demonstrated by their grandmothers. They explained:

Granma was a simple woman, very strong and feminine. WWII widow very typical for that time . . . she was a leader and a patriarch (her words). (GL)

For years I thought she wore rose-colored glasses when it came to my grandfather. . . . She was actually practicing a Biblical form of forgiveness . . . she was the glue that held the family together . . . she encouraged my faith . . . she worked hard all summer, canned, and tending her garden. (JB)

My mother is passionate about social justice, world peace, human rights. . . . My grandmother passed it on to my mother and she passed it on to me. (ABL)

She refused to conform to the social hierarchy/classism of her era and the expectations of women. (SS)

She started contracting, like she would go to the wedding and any services and she would go make sweets . . . cook for a day . . . it was better than starving or begging . . . she was independent . . . she went to a city where she had never been . . . she learned to talk and mingle with people. (LV)

Finding 3: Cultural and or geographical location influenced leadership transmission from grandmothers to granddaughters. The geographical locations and the cultures of the

grandmothers influenced what and how leadership transmission took place. Multiple languages were learned and spoken by grandmothers, and this encouraged the granddaughters to learn and speak additional languages. Some of these granddaughters in turn passed on the love of language to their own children by speaking multiple languages at home. As a caveat, regardless of cultural or geographical location, eight of the participants saw themselves as abandoned, forgotten, or left behind by their parents, which required them to spend most of their childhood with their grandparents; culturally, this is not the usual family pattern practiced globally. Cultural norms and mores were strictly observed, and some were challenged as grandmothers filled the void. Many granddaughters were impressed with the courage and strength of the grandmothers who had left home and moved to new places, whether within their native countries or emigration abroad. From these examples, granddaughters gained confidence to instill similar mores in their own lives.

India: We are Hindus. That's our religion . . . the oldest religion next to Chinese. I had to learn different languages . . . in India we have lots of languages . . . each language is totally different, in write, thought, dialect, everything is different . . . Sanskrit is not a spoken language . . . our language in which our book is written, like you have Latin, we have Sanskrit . . . it is not spoken. (In India) Years and years and years ago, they divided people into four different groups. One was Brahmins who took care of the services and the temple and pleasing God, etcetera, etcetera . . . we were the Brahmins, top class. (LV)

Bosnia: Everybody owned land in that village . . . she (grandmother) owned a little more, you know, than other people, and then we kind of helped her in land, but in return we had everything we need . . . potatoes, cabbages. (MP)

Pakistan: She spoke Urdu, but she could read Urdu and Arabic, which has similar script and just the Quran is in Arabic. She was teaching kids . . . little children . . . she was a mentor and a leader . . . she was the matriarch. . . . Nobody challenged her authority. (RR)

Austria: I mean I read lots and lots about why they all left but I don't know why she left at that particular time she did . . . you know people went to different places and different cities . . . they came directly to Philadelphia . . . so she lived all her life in Philadelphia once she got there. (TB)

USA: She shunned the tropes for women and wives at the time. And other high-society wives who were more concerned about looking helpless and frail, which was expected of women from their era. Grandma would cut the head off one of her chickens for dinner every Sunday, scalded it in an outside kettle . . . then plucked and cooked it. (SS)

Reflections on the Significance of Grandmothers in the Lives of Granddaughters

Granddaughters gave the following answers:

I miss her! And I am so grateful for everything I learned from her even though at the time I didn't realize I would need it. I am passing on to my granddaughter what I learned from my grandmother, respect, Christian values and I am more affectionate to her than my grandmother was to me, even though I know she loved me. (AP)

She was quiet and genteel and cultured. I would thank her for her gentility, and for raising an amazing woman, my mother. (ABL)

I love you. Thank you for loving me and believing in me. When I look at her life I am amazed. (JB).

I work hard, I am a people person, always smiling, laughing, and joking, I love the elderly, I treat my friends' grandparents as if they were mine, I treat everyone's child as if it was mine. God bless Granny. If I was to write a reference for Granny, I would say that she was beautiful, not only on the outside but on the inside too, kind, hardworking, strong . . . (TBo)

I would go around and worship her. I really would. She made sure I had enough vegetable and enough lentils, and she would feed me like a princess. (LV)

Upon reflection, my grandmother's influence was the most important one I had in my life so far. The first 11 years of my life were shared by her, and every step I have made since was with her in mind, my personal and lightning guide. I have always wanted to make her proud of everything I have made of myself . . . she was truly an amazing and compelling woman. My only regret is that I wasn't able to *thank* her for all she ever gave me. The love and security that as a child we often are oblivious of, unless you were denied it. I regret that I couldn't show her what I accomplished in my life and share my boys with her personally. I feel she is watching me wherever she is. She promised she would! (CM)

Blessed soul, I am grateful for you and honored to be in your lineage. Thank you, forever, for all you gave me. Until we meet again. (SS)

She is everywhere in my life . . . those informal but everyday interactions and engagements, is only in retrospect you start to see wow, they are really, really actually very, very, very powerful . . . she cares so much about our schooling . . . her emotional shelter . . . her love. (SC)

I would ask her, I would want to know more about what her life was really like. But I am sorry, I never did ask those questions when I was young. She taught me that women could be strong and be listened to. I wished I have a daughter that I could have named after her. (TB)

She was my entertainer and my shelter. (GL)

I have learned so much from my grandmother, and believe that because of her love, devotion, and words of wisdom, I am who I am to this very day and I thank her for that . . . ready to help someone in need, have a beautiful smile, dresses to impress on a Sunday morning, always has sweets in her handbag just in case she sees a child, as every child loves sweets, treat her friends' children and grandchildren as if they were her own. (TBo)

They both really enjoyed these things and I wouldn't have gotten the exposure from anyone else in my family and it is such a central part of my adult life. . . . I have wondered if my lifelong love of mysteries came from those times when my grandmother would read Dick Tracy to me. I was always close to my grandfather but I wonder if my grandmother knew how much I appreciated her. (MF)

I would say to my grandmother, Thank you, Mama, for all the years you spent with my loving care, with my sickness, and bring me up to be a child with discipline, manners. You've given me love, you've given me kindness, but most of all you have shown me how to love others, and to love God. Thank you for allowing me to express the love that I was given as a child. I saw how she lived with my grandfather . . . a very good impact on me. It would help me to bond with my husband more closer. (PJ)

Oh, I would say Nana; tell me about your life. Tell me about your growing up. Tell me about when you were a child, tell me about when you moved from Virginia to New Jersey, so that you could find a place where you could raise your children successfully. Tell me everything. I would want to know everything about her and I realize now that I never asked. I would ask lots of questions . . . just how much I respect her. (RMD)

I think I would ask her to teach me to how to be patient and how to not have a big ego. And how be like her. And she would probably tell me to be me. She probably say to me that I should love myself for who I am and that's the best way to not, you know, have a big ego. (RR)

I would say she is the best grandma ever! And that my memories of her are always happy and fond memories. And that thinking about her brings tears and makes me miss her extremely. (SS)

These statements demonstrate the ways in which granddaughters have experienced transformational leadership through close interactions with their grandmothers. They in turn

went on to develop leadership qualities, through raising the standards of behavior and pursuing ethical goals in their chosen careers.

Thematic Details

From the analysis of the data collected and findings presented, several themes emerged that linked the granddaughters' successes and leadership qualities to that of their grandmothers. While the findings provide in-depth, essential information gathered from the participants' stories, the themes are the categories distilled from the findings, providing significant and noteworthy discoveries or outcomes that support or challenge the thesis. These themes presented below support the original thesis:

Theme 1: Organizational Skills. The granddaughters were influenced by their grandmothers' organizational skills—words such as *organize*, *manage*, and *plan* were evident in their narratives.

Learning organizational skills provides indispensable training for leadership development. The granddaughters learned organizational skills from their grandmothers, providing them with the foundational abilities to utilize these skills in as they became leaders.

For example, TA informed that Grandmother organized activities to keep the grandchildren at home and off the streets, and on Sundays and special occasions she planned celebratory meals for her large family. As a doctor in practice with her business partners, she now uses those learned skills as she employs staff and deals with the business aspects of her partnership. TBo said that as an employee of the British government, she works with a cross-section of people at different levels of society, and because of the management skills she learned from her grandmother, she is able to perform her job at a high level of excellence. As an executive, she is required to be visionary and plan projects. Her grandmother, a factory worker,

would organize and plan her days so that as a member of the Women's Care group at her church, she could help to coordinate and assist with community programs. GL also employs organizational skills that she learned from her grandmother as she manages her household. RMD, as an entrepreneur, editor, and self-employed, utilizes management skills she learned from her grandmother.

The granddaughters verbally identified their grandmothers' mentoring as essential to their leadership development. The common threads of work ethic, fiscal responsibility, religion, and education were fundamental codes of behavior that were reflected on and were recurring themes identified by the granddaughters. The following leadership traits were identified with the grandmother-granddaughter dyad: courage, persistence, strength, survival skills, entrepreneurial spirit, fiscal responsibility, vision, and understanding the times in which they lived. The granddaughters perceived that their leadership qualities and successes were directly associated with these areas of influences. These were demonstrated accordingly by the granddaughters.

Theme 2. Work Ethic. The granddaughters were all positively influenced by the work ethic of the grandmothers; their leadership development and work mindsets were shaped by what they had observed and learned.

The dignity of work regardless of the type of work being done is an essential theme in how granddaughters viewed their grandmothers' contributions to their own work ethic and leadership development. Work ethic is an important practice belief of core progressive values; it links the dignity of work to self-worth. The grandmothers' work, which was mainly tied to the home, nevertheless provided for them a sense of dignity and self-worth. The granddaughters recognized the importance of their grandmothers' work ethic and incorporated those core values

in their leadership development as they realized their potential in the world. Below are statements from the granddaughters:

RMD is a copywriter and organizer by profession. She facilitated courses in diversity and team development for nonprofits and business corporations. RMD described her grandmother's influence by saying:

My respect for her is unbridled, there is nothing I hold her to task for . . . she was responsible, warm . . . she had a sense of humor . . . I just remember . . . many, many ways that I respect who she was and how she held her place in the world and made the world a better place.

MMG, who works as a college administrator said: "Positively, everything about who I am is because of my grandmother. From my work ethic to my sense of humor, is because of her impact on me."

TA said her grandmother managed the compound where her 14 grandchildren and their mothers lived. Now she works as a partner in an OB/GYN practice, in addition to managing her home.

GL was impressed with her grandmother's work ethic. GL noted: "She was skilled to raise her family, to survive . . . she made the presents mostly . . . very simple and very cheap . . . because she did not have much in the USSR."

MF reflected: "I would thank both her (grandmother) and grandfather for giving me a love of nature and the land, in particular a passion for growing things and watching/identifying/feeding the birds." A college administrator, MF works preparing students with their applications for prestigious scholarships, fellowships, and honors, which requires authentic and honest work ethic.

TBo works for the government in England. She works hard at position and has been promoted several times over the years. She explained:

My granny used to talk of her hard life growing up. . . . In England she worked at John Players Special, a large cigarette factory . . . she used to operate the cigarette making machine . . . she was hardworking and strong . . . now I work hard, because of her example. (TBo)

AP described herself as coming from a family of strong Christian women. Growing up in a White society she explained that “the only employment available to a young colored woman was housekeeping and being a nanny to the wealthy citizens. Her grandmother “was a doer . . . she worked at these jobs to help provide for her family. She used a push mower to mow the entire Lincoln Cemetery, a burial place for the Black citizens of the area (paying respect to loved ones)”. The work ethic of her grandmother has helped her as she works as a support staff member at a college; to provide for her family she works a second job in the evenings. As she reflected, she has choices her grandmother never had.

“She cut hay with a scythe, and proudly sported her bicep muscles and tanned arms from doing farm work.” (SS)

Today, MG tries to live the American Dream by supporting her husband’s manual labor in the orchards and helping to provide for her family. She learned the importance of work ethic from her grandmother, who planted a garden of fruits, vegetables, and peppers. Her daily activities included caring for the cows and small animals: chickens and turkeys.

Theme 3. Fiscal Responsibility. The granddaughters were exposed to their grandmothers as they practiced fiscal responsibility. The granddaughters also developed sensible habits of fiscal responsibility which provided them with skills of how to manage their finances as well as for some to become entrepreneurs.

Fiscal responsibility is a modern economic concept that was never used by the grandmothers or granddaughters to describe how their households’ finances were handled; however, it was inferred by some of the participants that they learned through observation how

their grandmothers effectively managed their finances. Fiscal responsibility is an essential aspect of leadership development, identified by the granddaughters as a key mentoring tool. Listed below are statements by the granddaughters:

SIS's life today demonstrates fiscal responsibility and entrepreneurial skills that she attributes to her grandmother's modeling. About her grandmother she said: "She had no educational background . . . yet, she became a business woman." SIS works as a federal government employee, and like her grandmother she is a business woman: she manages the family real estate and construction businesses, which she co-founded. In addition, she is a successful beautician, with her own company. SIS mentioned, "My grandmother taught me how to be a business woman."

SS explained that "I became successful as fully becoming the human being I am by seeing the authenticity modeled by my grandmother's life" and by her lifelong rejection of elitism in her role as the banker's wife and her embracing working-class values, like close connection with the earth and the farming. She "refused to conform to the social hierarchy/classism of her era and the expectations of women." Although she was "the banker's wife," "she shunned the tropes for women and wives at that time." Utilizing farm skills, for Sunday dinner she "cut off the head of the chickens . . . scalded it in a kettle outside . . . bled it out then plucked and cooked it." SS pointed to a similar tendency to non-conformity in her own life: as director of the Women's Center at Gettysburg College, she demonstrates the strong will of her grandmother and stands her ground in controversies, supports women's causes, and is an advocate for young women trying to find their way and their voices. She also demonstrated fiscal skills by holding down dual positions, and was confident in challenging and walking away when conflict arose around ethical issues that would have compromised her leadership.

Theme 4: Education. Granddaughters identified an emphasis on education as the fundamental empowerment vehicle for leadership development and upward mobility.

What we have learned from others becomes our own by reflection.

—Emerson, *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Attaining “a good education” was a central theme that emerged among the granddaughters as an important component of their leadership achievement. The intentionality and determination of these grandmothers to educate their granddaughters became evident in the lives of the adult granddaughters as they emulated their grandmothers’ determination and tenacity, and as they persisted in creating better lives for themselves. Through the encouragement of their grandmothers, granddaughters recognized that education was one of the most effective ways to rise above poverty and pay forward by contributing to their communities. All except one completed high school. Some gained professional diplomas, certifications, and advanced degrees. Examples of the granddaughters’ successes are:

SC, an anthropologist and assistant professor, explained that although her grandmother could not read, she knew the importance of education and supported her grandchildren’s attendance at school, and as they were the “forgotten and discarded children of our parents,” grandmother made it her contribution to be the backbone of her family by giving her grandchildren a better life. She prepared their meals and allowed them to attend school. SC became an anthropologist to further understand humanity.

JP, a British-trained synthesizer engineer, attributed her leadership and success to her grandmother, who instilled in her the importance of getting a good education.

MP, although she was a school psychologist in Bosnia, now works here in the U.S. as a teaching assistant for special-needs children. MP believes in the empowerment of women and is very active in providing economic and technical support to women in Bosnia. She ascribed her

accomplishments to Baba's influence on her education. Grandmother, Baba, was not educated, so therefore she did not read traditional bedtime stories; however, she lived very close to MP's school and sometimes would go there to eat with her. MP explained that Baba respected and knew the value of education and would leave money in books like the Bible and would sell her produce to help fund MP's education.

MMG is the first in her family to attend and graduate from college. She gives all credits for her success to her grandmother, who insisted that her granddaughter volunteer in nonprofit agencies, from which she developed civic responsibility and the ideal of giving back to the community. These actions helped to prepare MMG for active campus involvement when she attended college and now is engaged in working with college students.

LV lives in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. She is a mother of adult children and also is a grandmother. She emigrated from India to the U.S. in the mid-1960s with her husband, a doctor. She worked as an office manager in her husbands' practice and also worked as a night auditor at a local hotel. Unschooled and illiterate, LV's grandmother learned to read when granddaughter, LV, taught her many years later. LV explained that, "She pushed me and no matter who said what, I was the most beautiful, most intelligent, most everything . . . I think she was my hero . . . despite all she had been through." LV explained that because of her grandmother's encouragement and desire for her to be educated, she obtained her degree, which has served her well.

CM noted that "during my school days where education became so important . . . because she (grandmother) never had the same choices, I felt I had to push myself to step up in this world." "She shaped my life . . . my grandmother's influence was the most important one I had

in my life so far . . . I have always wanted to make her proud.” CM made her grandmother proud by becoming a successful nurse and entrepreneur.

Theme 5: Religion. Most of the granddaughters acknowledged that a commitment to a religious faith was a significant aspect of their personal lives as well as their leadership development. The granddaughters demonstrated belief in actions consistent with the values and principles of the grandmothers’ religious beliefs. Religious faiths and religious affiliations provide moral and civic structures in family life, because all religions have rules and codes of conducts whereby members are judged or are expected to abide. A commitment to a religious order provides reinforcement of qualities that are valued as essential elements of society. Members are supported when they obey the rules or are ostracized if they fail to do so. This affiliation motivates members to strive to achieve a better way of life, often realizing their potentials. In many societies the civil laws are directly linked or taken from the religious laws; for example, in the United States of America, many of the laws are drawn from the Judeo-Christian commandments. These sought-after values are significant aspects of leadership development, helping members to participate more fully in society. Religion has played a fundamental role in the lives of most of the participants. For them, their religious affiliations are diverse and deeply entrenched. The grandmothers have been influential in laying the framework of their families’ religiosity, spanning the breadth of the major world religions. The religions identified by participants were: Judaism, Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Native Indian. Two of the participants did not mention religious affiliations.

LV has lived a life surrounded by icons of her faith. She is a vegetarian who practices the Hindu religion and is a member of the Brahmin caste. She is very active in several local organizations dealing with women and community issues. She attributes her accomplishments to

observing the principles of her Hindu religion and by the rules and guidance of her grandmother, whose courage and tenacity she admired.

TA noted that “I look back and wonder how I have been able to get where I am now and attribute them to my granny’s impact in my life.” She further noted, “After four years of teaching in a college, I quit to pursue my dream of being an OB/Gyn. Some of the great attributes and advice instilled in me by Granny and of course by God’s grace made it possible to get through.”

SC is a practicing Buddhist who attributes her practicing religion to the influence of her grandmother. Her grandmother being born in the spring is a good omen, associated with the goddess of compassion and the reading of the Sutra (holy book). SC incorporates elements of her religion into her teaching; her areas of expertise are cross-cultural learning and the ancestors’ way of learning—the Yin and Yang, manifested in learning, experiencing life through the senses, recognizing and valuing the importance of the seasons of life.

MMG explained that she is a Christian who was raised in her grandmother’s household which at some point changed from Catholicism to Christianity. A devout Christian, Ma left the Catholic Church when she decided that she did not need “a father or priest to talk to God on her behalf as she was quite capable of praying to God herself.” Ma kept a strict household: no cursing, hanging out on the streets, or rude behavior were tolerated. They all went to church on Sundays and other days of the week. Ma also helped to clean the church and helped in other capacities, such as ushering, “doing the Lord’s work.” These rules and structured life style, according to MMG, helped to form the foundation of her spiritual, personal, and professional development.

RR lives on the outskirts of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and is a medical doctor at the local hospital; she practices the Islam faith. RR is an advocate for Muslim students, supports

cross-cultural events, and helps to educate the community about the Islam religion and way of life. RR's grandmother, called "Dadi Amma," was a teacher and was paid by the government to teach children how to read Arabic and the Quran. These classes were held inside her home. In those days girls were not allowed to attend school, so she taught all the young girls in the community how to read and write as well. RR illustrated that she was deeply impressed with the work her grandmother had done in the community, and as a result she went to medical school to become a doctor to help the people of the community and her faith.

TB is a White, Jewish, college professor who teaches courses on women writers, gender, and sexuality, with expertise and interest in issues dealing with immigration. An activist, she is involved in community work with her husband. TB stated her grandmother and her family were not religious. And neither is she. She has memories of lighted candles and sitting Shiva. However, TB noted that grandmother had courage to have left her homeland so far away and then to be accused as an immigrant of "mongrelizing the Aryan race" in America.

Theme 6. Acknowledgment/Recognition of Positive Influence. The adult granddaughters credited their successes and leadership abilities to the early influences of their grandmothers.

All 20 participants expressed thankfulness for their grandmothers' positive influence on their lives:

AP noted that her success was due to her "Grandma Hazel's attitude: 'never give up, and have confidence in who you are. Be a doer not a follower, be a leader, and make sure you are knowledgeable about all things that you are surrounded by, and get involved and be giving of yourself.' I live that mantra daily." GL noted that her grandmother was "a leader and a patriarch [sic]. . . . I hope that I'll be as good respected [sic] by my children and in-law in the future. . . . I

will pass all her lessons on to my future generations.” GL further noted she inherited from her grandmother values such as responsibility, honesty, service to community, and being family oriented. These values have stood her well in her adult life.

MF informed that her grandmother “had patience and generosity in abundance, neither of which comes easily to me. Whatever of those qualities that I demonstrate, it is directly because of her influence.” MF noted that she draws on these qualities in her work as she relates to her students. MF further said, “Nana was an avid reader. She was the one who got me started reading detective stories. I think I got her ‘common touch’ mentality. She was a leader by example. I think that I am more assertive than she was in that regards. She lived alone for many years after the death of my grandfather. That takes a certain strength that a lot of people don’t have . . . maybe I got her spirit of independence. . . . I learned early in life from her that I needed to take care of myself and not assume that you can lean on other people when times get rough.”

GL described her grandma as a WWII widow survivor with four children, who had to manage her household and provide for the children, “Those were tough times. When I found myself divorced with two six-year-old boys to care for, I kept my head up and show the best example of dignity and intelligence. I knew my grandma had survived. I am proud to say my sons are living by high standards as well. . . . Grandma admonished me to make my own way and develop my skills.”

Looking back, granddaughters were able to identify leadership skills, values, and potentials that could be associated with their grandmothers. They can now understand how their grandmothers’ interactions and relationships with them during their formative years influenced their leadership potential and successes as adults. In a few cases inverse influence was also evident. Examples of this were evident in the narratives of LV and DP. LV’s grandmother, being

of the Brahmin caste, promoted elitist discriminatory attitudes, but LV, her granddaughter, is now a leader in the local NAACP chapter. DP's grandmother's mysterious past under the Nazi regime in Germany provided a catalyst for her granddaughter's biracial marriage.

Intentionally, the overwhelming majority of the grandmothers represented a diverse cross-cultural group who were from many international as well as domestic locations. Geographical locations and the cultures of the grandmothers influenced what and how leadership transmission took place. Granddaughters were impressed with the courage and strength of the grandmothers who had left home and moved to new places. TB, whose grandmother emigrated from Austria, observed "how hard it is to leave one's country and go to another." This move demonstrated courage as TB further said, "How much we owe to our parents and grandparents who have come to this country." TB observed, "Because I came from a line of strong women, it gave me options. I chose higher education." Of importance is the fact that today TB teaches a course on "Literature and Immigration." LV's grandmother, in keeping their Indian Brahmin heritage, mentored her granddaughter in survival strategies. She told her, "As a girl, when you get married, you should not talk very highly of your own parents' family, be humble . . . listen to your in-laws . . . bring a good name to your family." LV, who had a difficult mother-in-law, never opposed her and brought credit to the family as a teacher and advocate for racial equality. The latter accomplishment shows an example of inverse influence because LV was a high-caste Hindu in a color-based caste society.

Summary of Findings

This chapter detailed the experiences of the participants, a sample of 20 women, and portrayed the diverse and global complexities of their experiences. The discussion revealed reasons why grandmothers were considered leaders by their granddaughters. The findings

provide examples of textural and structural descriptions, the how and what of the meanings and essences of the experiences. The greatest challenge for me as a researcher was to make sense of the large volume of data, reduce the information gathered, find the patterns, and draw out the essence of the experiences.

In presenting an analysis and synthesis of the findings, it should be noted that the sample was small, a sample size of 20 participants. Some qualitative research projects use larger samples. However, the diversity of the participants enhanced the value of the smaller sample size. The study highlighted successful adult women who attributed their successes to the influence and modeling of positive leadership values by their grandmothers. The granddaughters were empowered and motivated to build lifestyles that would make their grandmothers proud. The grandmothers' values affected the behavior and emotional well-being, as well as physical health, and ignited the granddaughters' potential, which in turn helped to frame their character, their self-worth, their ambition, and their integrity. The perceptions of these women concerning these qualities were strongly linked to their relationships with their grandmothers. It should be noted, however, that inferences drawn from this study are exclusive to the experiences of the sample studied.

Of great significance to the study is the intimate human-essence factor. In recognizing the subjective nature of the experiences related and the use of a qualitative inquiry, I tried to avoid biases. However, it might not be evident from my own experiences, having been raised by my grandmothers, that I have not been as unbiased as I should be. I have acknowledged that different meanings can be ascribed to the data as collected. In addition, I became engaged in reflections and dialogues with my campus advisor, which challenged the approach to the research project. I tried to remain open to additional stories and meanings that emerged after the initial interviews.

Moreover, I tried to understand how each of the participants' stories was meaningful and valuable. My goal was to present accurately the experiences of the women interviewed, while controlling as best I could for my own biases. There are numerous ways to make sense of the findings and I have tried to accommodate a broad interpretation of the results; however, I acknowledge that my findings represent just one possible analysis.

Credibility Analysis

Qualitative research is judged by standards to establish the trustworthiness of the study. Of paramount importance is the answer to questions such as these: "Did the researcher get it right?" "Did the researcher fully understand what the participants said and wanted him/her to know?" "Did the researcher document the narratives accurately?" "Is the final report truthful and believable?" Creswell (1998, p. 196) described fundamental standards as important areas that confirm the efficacy of the study: the inquiry community, which provides guidelines for future publications of the work; positionality, which shows the content to be authentic and honest; community, which acknowledges that the research addresses the community that the study was done under—for example, feminist thought; voice, allowing the participants to speak for themselves and not be silenced or marginalized; critical subjectivity, the researcher's self-awareness, which helps him/her explore his/her psychological and emotional state throughout the process; reciprocity, the mutual sharing of deep, personal information, which requires trust; sacredness, the development of a respectful, collaborative, and symbiotic relationship between researcher and participant(s); and sharing of privileges, in which researcher may share royalties and rewards with participant(s).

The four criteria that I have used to evaluate the trustworthiness of the study were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility. The best judges for deciding the credibility of the study are the participants. To address credibility, I used member checks: the participants were asked to review the collected data and confirm, refute, further explain, or fill in any gaps, to ensure that the results of the study were believable and trustworthy. Credibility asks the question, “Can the readers trust the stories reported by the participants as documented by me, the researcher?” To the best of my ability I truthfully reported and presented the women’s stories while trying to avoid personal biases and distortions; however, there were biases evident in two areas because of my personal experiences with these issues: (a) reporting on the children left behind by their parents, and (b) documenting women who had emigrated, leaving family behind, to establish themselves in a foreign land. These two areas triggered own my memories of being left behind by my mother, who emigrated to England with her husband when I was nine years old, as well as recognition of emigration patterns by many of my peers’ parents and later by myself. However, I believe that my biases generated positive research results. When participants mentioned any of these issues, I immediately became alert and dug deeper into the interviews to see if their experiences were similar to mine, affirming my experience and theirs. The depth and richness of the study were evident as I provided full and strong descriptions of the participants and their narratives. By thoughtful design, I provided visualizations, a kaleidoscope of each experience, within the boundaries of the study.

Transferability. I have provided “thick” descriptions, with detailed and specific accounts of the women’s experiences. I used vivid language to help create images of their experiences. Their emotions—laughter, sadness, and remorse—were all evident in the narratives. The phenomenological methodology used was well developed, which will help future researchers to replicate this study, because I have presented comprehensive information concerning the

procedure and the participants. If a researcher has similar research circumstances, he or she will be able to transfer the methods of this study to another study in a similar context. This study is a model that epitomizes transferability because of the full and detailed results.

Dependability. To satisfy the dependability measure, I utilized the services of an outside auditor to check the data (participants' transcribed narratives) and provided him with the detailed information of the process used to collect the data and carry out the study. This process allowed the auditor to check for dependability or constancy and confirm that the procedure of data collection, interpretation, findings, and final report was carried out according to established standards. This documentation, a functional prototype, will provide future researchers with the essential information for replication with potential for different results.

Confirmability. Confirmability provides the measure by which the result can be supported by other researchers. To ensure the confirmability measure, I applied the following audits: I sought outside help from my former professor of sociology to examine the process of how the data were collected, filed, and preserved. The auditor engaged in detailed scrutiny, cross-referenced and examined the themes that emerged, and looked for evidence that led to them. He provided both face-to-face as well as written suggestions with his recommendations concerning bias and distortion. A final audit was carried out based on these recommendations. Triangulation, the unique method that enables the data confirmation process, was employed to strengthen the confirmability standard. Data triangulation was demonstrable by the auditor's intense examination, my campus advisor review, and member checks. The auditor is Dr. Charles Emmons, sociology professor at Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. His report is detailed here.

As a sociologist, he saw the following issues of credibility:

1) Validity and Reliability

- Validity: Noted that participants might have experienced awareness of social desirability in response. For example, in the case of the participant (DP) whose grandmother lived during the Nazi occupation of Germany. Obviously, these interviewees gave their views whether they *think* grandmother had a certain influence.
- Reliability: When re-interview becomes relevant, the re-use of the questionnaire can have reliability issues.
- The methodology: Presents difficulty that cannot be eliminated without the use of a longitudinal study (therefore presents limitations of the research).
- Comparison with other sources: For example, comparable case about Germans not discussing the Nazi past.

2) Maybe the issue is whether the interviewees made it clear what the impact was (on their lives). If so, they could state how it was clear to them. If not, maybe it needs to show the inference made. For example, if the interviewee is a teacher and says grandmother was a teacher or emphasized good study habits in answer to the question, then the impact is implied. But if a statement had no obvious relevance, a probing question would have been in order. “Look for a specific place in your chapters where the link between influence and effect could be made clearer (or argue that it is obvious).”

- 3) “You may want to show specific examples of lines where connections between cause and effect (as perceived by interviewee) are not clear, in case your adviser points some specific cases out.”

We further discussed perceived influence, which the auditor described as “the social desirability effect and responses of granddaughters to grandmothers’ actions as conformity to positive expectation within a group or community.” Also, the participants might not be telling what they actually think, because of events that occurred that they are not comfortable with. It is impossible to measure quantitatively the grandmothers’ influence because it goes beyond the scope of this study for methodological reasons and because it is not a longitudinal study.

Response to Audit

- 1) I found Dr. Emmons’s comments on validity and reliability worthy of challenge because a study does not have to be longitudinal in order for it to be valid and reliable. Naturally, a longitudinal study would provide data based on observation over time, while this study documented the stories based on the memory and experiences of the participants, which is neither cohort based nor panel based.
- 2) I tried to make the influence that I perceived more evident to the readers, and I added additional comments where the influence seemed to me already obvious.
- 3) Inverse influence in several cases was noted as specific examples where cause-and-effect was not definite.

Chapter Summary

This study provided an opportunity for the women to reflect on their family histories and examine their legacies through lenses that they might not have used before. The study provided the opportunity for the participants to be reminded that history can challenge, expose, explain, or

confirm long-held perspectives with unintended or deliberate consequences as they dig into and reflect on the lives of their grandmothers. Kouzes and Posner (2007) support the importance of narratives, acknowledging that “Stories aren’t meant to be kept private; they are meant to be told” (p. 326). The lessons of history, however painful or practical, can serve as catalysts to create the next generation of leaders. It is valuable to have a sense of history and connection with one’s ancestors. A just society needs leaders who can make a positive difference; therefore, it is of utmost importance to honor and recognize the significant contributions of visionary grandmothers who have nurtured present and future women leaders.

In this chapter, I presented the three findings in sequence with the research questions. To authenticate the findings, I made extensive use of verbatim quotes. By using the actual words and phrases of the participants, I believe I brought alive their images during the interviews, as well as shone a spotlight on the lives of their grandmothers. In this study I found several threads common among the grandmothers.

- Religious affiliation was an important identifiable characteristic among the grandmothers. Nineteen of the women claimed one of the world’s major religions as important to their grandmothers and to them. The grandmothers sang in church choirs, played the piano at church, worshipped God, baptized a granddaughter, observed holy days, practiced rituals, and memorized holy writings.
- All believed in and were ardent supporters of education for their granddaughters. They provided money for books, school fees, and private lessons, and extended inverse influence where education was lacking.
- They wanted granddaughters to be successful and not have to work as hard as they did. One grandmother taught her granddaughter to read music and play the piano.

- An overwhelming number of the grandmothers, 18, were illiterate, semi-literate, or had very few years of basic education.
- All were domestic: they were homemakers, performers of household chores, gardeners, and caregivers.

The primary finding of the study is that all of the grandmothers represented in this study took active roles in the care and protection of their granddaughters. The granddaughters as successful adult leaders emulated these qualities. These grandmothers were themselves poor, except for one (the banker's wife). The participants shared stories of how grandmothers kept gardens to provide food during the Depression. Others canned fruits and vegetables, baked bread, or raised and sold chickens. The grandmothers not only provided nourishment but offered shelter, physical protection, and mental security. The granddaughters, learning from their grandmothers, practiced fiscal responsibilities that enabled them to move up the socio-economic ladder, utilizing their education as the vehicle for their upward mobility.

The second finding was that the grandmothers portrayed identifiable leadership qualities that, through mentoring, enabled leadership development in their granddaughters. At first only 10 of the participants associated leadership qualities with their grandmothers. Later, upon reflection and during subsequent conversations, an overwhelming number noted that yes, their grandmothers had exhibited leadership traits.

The third finding was that cultural and geographical locations influenced how leadership qualities were passed on from grandmother to granddaughter. The grandmothers represented a diverse cross-cultural group from various countries, including the United States. Due to political upheaval, mass migration, immigration, civil war, and social and economic issues, the left-behind daughters became the wards of their grandmothers. Five of the eight granddaughters

became members of large extended families, with resulting jealousy, special needs, and social, emotional, and physical adjustments to households and family income.

Cultural norms and mores were observed by grandmothers as they lived within their communities, and some were challenged for their beliefs. Each grandmother had to work within the confines of her cultural and geographical location as leadership values were passed on. Each experience was unique and different, as were the family units. For example, TA's granny took on the responsibility of raising her dead son's 14 children. Religion and politics were also factors that affected how and when leadership values were passed on. DP from Germany briefly mentioned Hitler's regime and how her grandmother did not salute the monument if no one was around. Many granddaughters were impressed with the courage and strength of grandmothers who had left homelands and moved to new places, whether within their native countries or abroad. The granddaughters co-opted these qualities and later used words such as *role model*, *leader*, *influenced*, *activist*, *mentor*, "*proud of*," *courageous*, *strong*, *matriarch*, and *respected* to describe their grandmothers. As final caveat, 15 of the participants have become "global citizens," moving away from their home states, and are engaged in political and civil activities and organizations that work for world peace and equity.

This chapter summary provided the vehicle for me as a researcher to make sense of the vast collection of data obtained from the participants and it provided me with the opportunity for analysis and interpretation of the findings. This process examined, deconstructed, and helped me explore and find the meaning "behind the meanings" of the findings, and allowed for the comparison of the findings from my research with those of others within the same area of study.

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this phenomenological inquiry was to examine, within a globally diverse sample of successful women, their perceptions of how their grandmothers' leadership qualities helped them to become successful adults. The use of a transcendental phenomenological perspective, according to Moustakas (1994), enables a researcher to analyze the collected data and extrapolate from it the essence of the stories while clarifying the meaning of the experiences. The findings in this study added significant authority to the limited research on grandmothers' leadership roles. The conclusions arrived at in this study are aligned with the research questions and the findings as set out in the fourth chapter. Here, as the researcher, I will provide recommendations and describe the implications and outcomes of this study. The insights that became evident in this research have significant application to a greater understanding of grandmother in individual and professional development.

Revisiting the Assumptions in the Introduction

These assumptions as presented in the first chapter, the Introduction, originated from my personal background. My experiences have provided me with intimate knowledge of the phenomenon, allowing me to formulate the following assumptions for this study:

- Grandmothers can be powerful and influential transmitters of family history and values and can pass on acquired leadership skills to impressionable granddaughters as they transition into adulthood.
- Due to historical classification in the portrayal and associations that surround those who are identified as leaders, there remains a bias against aged women (ageism and gender) and the value of their leadership contributions and experiences.

- The lack of research recognizing grandmothers' position in the leadership canon is also due to the complicity of granddaughters who have remained silent in identifying their grandmothers' leadership contributions to their successes.

The analysis of the findings strongly supports the assumptions. The first assumption, that grandmothers can be powerful and influential transmitters of family history and values and can pass on acquired leadership skills to impressionable granddaughters as they transition into adulthood, was proven correct as the participants' narratives provided many examples of their grandmothers' roles in the transmission of leadership values. The second assumption states that due to historical classification, portrayal, and association of those identified as leaders, there remains a bias against aged women (ageism and gender) and the value of their leadership contributions and experiences. This assumption held true because in many cases the granddaughters were able to reflect upon and identify those biases.

The third and final assumption posits that the lack of research recognizing grandmothers' position in the leadership canon is also due to the unintended complicity of granddaughters who have remained silent in identifying their grandmothers' leadership contributions to their successes. Their silence, I believe, was due to the fact that they had never been asked the question of whether or how their grandmothers' roles had prepared them for success. This point was evident in statements made to me at the conclusions of the interviews: "Thank you for doing this;" "In reflection, yes, she did help to make me who I am today;" "I never thought of her in the leadership role until now;" "She was the central figure in my life;" "I wish I could say thank you to her for helping to make me who I am today." The assumption held true because this inadvertent complicity by the granddaughters was due to societal ignorance and the absence of

previous grandmothers' leadership models, as well as lack of rigorous research of grandmothers' experience evidenced in the review of literature.

Implications for the individual. These descriptive words help to provide imagery of how women in leadership can help to influence others. Strong, healthy women are more likely to be acknowledged or placed in leadership positions. Creative and progressive skills are qualities that resonate also with leadership models. Positive, compassionate, and wise women can help to create healthy homes, provide vision and creativity in the workplace, and build vibrant communities. In the western world, girls have access to education, which is mandatory; however in many other countries education is denied to girls and women. Many of the grandmothers resisted this oppression and impressed on their granddaughters the need for education. As girls learn from their grandmothers, they too learn leadership skills and as adults utilize their skills and talents in their homes, workplaces, and communities in congruence with the grandmothers' core values and beliefs.

Implications for the professional. When young girls are raised well, they develop confidence. "Raised well" can be defined as having positive role models while being given the opportunities to develop their skills and talents. Girls who are allowed to take risks within limits, and who are challenged to form and develop their own opinions, seek out opportunities in the future. These qualities help to build their self-esteem, inspire visions, and help women to celebrate victories and success. They have dreams and develop life purposes, and become valued members of society. In their desire to succeed, they seek out professions or careers that will allow them to take their places in society. They become perceptive to the needs of others and value their accomplishments; they become entrepreneurs, innovators, and creators, whether they use their skills as homemakers or engineers. They bring to their career the unique female

perspective, women's ways of knowing based on socialization in the company of other women. Women's ways of knowing can be visionary, reflecting an inimitable approach to project management and leadership, resulting in a highly visible and valued presence in the workplace or home.

Implications for society. There is a need for continued research on the role and contributions of grandmothers. This research should help to awaken and raise public consciousness and generate knowledge and information about the grandmother-granddaughter dyad. The dissemination of information, as well as the raising of public consciousness, can be powerful allies in recognizing the leadership value of grandmothers. There is a need to provide economic, physical, psychological, and emotional support to identify gender-based relationships or groups that are deficient in these areas. Addressing the welfare and unique environments of young girls who are being raised or mentored by grandmothers has important implications for societal and family policies. There is societal implication in the transmission of culture while recognizing the role gender plays in historical as well as family traditions and rituals. Societal implications are also entrenched in support for women's rights, women's health, and women's education. The interventions of grandmothers in the lives of their granddaughters have helped to balance many families. When women are successful, families are positively enriched and strengthened. Society, too, is enhanced and becomes a vibrant environment, which helps to provide amenities and structures for families to strive and be healthy. The granddaughters' exposures to the transformative leadership qualities of their grandmothers provided the opportunities for them to reproduce the same type of leadership in their careers and with their families—thus strengthening and authenticating the value of feminist leadership as a viable form of transformative leadership. Burns (1978) brilliantly described and explained how this type of

leadership functions, thus validating the significance of the grandmother-granddaughter leadership value:

Transforming leadership . . . occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Their purposes, which might have started out as separated but related, as in the case of transactional leadership, become fused. Power bases are linked not as counterweights but as mutual support for common purpose . . . transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both. (p. 20)

The above quote exemplifies the core principle of the grandmother-granddaughter dyad and the possibilities of the granddaughters' realization of their full potential through the transforming effects of these relationships. The granddaughters' successes then can influence cultural, global, and national attitudes, helping to change prevailing mindsets and marginalization.

In many of the narratives, men were missing from the home environment, or the granddaughters simply failed to mention them as part of the household. Typically, the grandmother-granddaughter dyad was so strong that there was no mention of a male influence. However, the inclusion of men and their contributions in the paradigm could be significant in recognizing and honoring the work of grandmothers, although this point was never dealt with in this study. There is also a need to counter the distorted depictions and caricatures of older women as frequently represented in the media and children literature. There is a need, too, for the development and distribution of resources that can provide equal opportunities for grandmothers to pass on their vast experiences and skills garnered over decades, not only to their granddaughters but to their communities as well. Another implication for further research is the need for empirical studies that are congruent with the experiences and values of grandfathers.

Recommendations

Change usually brings results, which can be either positive or negative. A grandmother's profound influence on the life of a granddaughter can alter her life course in dramatic ways. A study of the grandmother-granddaughter relationship provides an opportunity for the portrayal of the grandmother-granddaughter relationship as it moves from provider-protector to engagement of the granddaughters' growing confidence and success. I offer the following recommendations based on the findings, analysis, and conclusions.

The recommendations are:

- The definition of leadership should be broadened to include the role of grandmothers and nontraditional models such as young women and individuals with disability. The imagery and reconstruction of what leadership is should include enlightened views through the prisms of new and emerging family configurations.
- Future bodies of literature should include studies that recognize the contributions of grandmothers in their varied leadership roles.
- Future researchers should conduct similar studies using a more expansive sample size.
- Studies of the grandmother-granddaughter unique relationships should continue to be encouraged.
- Scholars should continue to engage in dialogue on the value to society in documenting the stories of the grandmother-granddaughter dyad.
- Television, social media, and webinars should be encouraged to portray older women in a positive light, in a cross-section of leadership roles.

- Educational materials and experiential learning should strive to provide models for boys and girls to conceptualize older women in leadership positions.
- Granddaughters who did not have positive experiences with their grandmothers should also be given to opportunity to share those stories.
- Participants should be proud of their contributions to the literature by sharing their stories, and in turn should share those stories with family members, especially young girls. These stories, whether positive or negative, are valuable.

Finally, future research could include the following dyads: grandmother-grandson; grandfather-granddaughter, and grandfather-grandson. Families with LGBTQA components should also be researched.

Personal and Professional Views

I am heartened from my research to find that that there is a greater media attention given to how today's grandmothers are impacting society and therefore helping to shape the lives of their granddaughters. Freedman's (2014) *New York Times* article, "Chronicling Mississippi's 'Church Mothers,' and Getting to Know a Grandmother"; and Weinstein's (2014) article, "'Go check on Gramma,' my father said" are writings that spotlight grandmothers as leaders. With Graham's (2014) AARP article, "'Grandma' Gets a Reboot," these are examples of the latest trend. Graham noted that advances in medicine and nutrition have brought on a new vitality and extended the lives of women by about 25 years, with life expectancy now of 81 years, compared to 56.8 in 1914.

Throughout this journey, I kept in touch with the participants and I relived my own experiences with my grandmother. I was also touched by the insights and expressions of love as well as the unique and familiar family bonds strengthened by the involvement of grandmothers

in the lives of their granddaughters. I experienced their challenges, and the depth of their pain, but I also laughed at the funny moments and reminisced about comparable experiences in a safe space.

As I bring this phenomenological study to a close, I take this opportunity to examine the findings in juxtaposition with what is known. I reviewed the existing literature to position my research and substantiate the need for this study. Textural and structural descriptions added depth to the holistic portrayal of the participants' experiences and existing data. The data drawn from my study added vital credence to the literature.

My study differs from similar family relationship studies in that participants and their grandmothers were studied through the feminist lens, giving voice and adding value to the leadership contributions of grandmothers and the opportunity for granddaughters to honor the contributions of their grandmothers. The granddaughters' perceptions and memories were vital to the study. This effort also differs from other studies in that the roles of grandmothers were valued as important leadership qualities. Moreover, adult granddaughters, upon reflection, were recognizing the profound changes that had taken place in their lives, and the significance of their grandmothers' influence on their successes. Most participants had come from humble beginnings; however, their life purposes and life courses were dramatically changed by the intervention of their grandmothers.

For me, this study from inception to completion has affected my life in many ways. I have experienced professional, intellectual, and spiritual growth. At no time did I minimize the conversations or stories told by the participants. I considered it a pilgrimage and privilege to have been invited into the lives and family history of the participants. I was saddened at some of the stories and found joy in many others, but I endeavored never to say "I know what you meant

or experienced.” While I gained insights into what some of the experiences might have been like, I recognized that as an international group, there were global events that marked their family histories differently. The families all had the same basic human needs: the need for food, shelter, security, clothing, relationship, and a purpose in life. They were different based on cultural nuances, language/communication styles, religion, historical experiences, mores, values, and the impact of their socio-economic and physical environments. These significant differences impacted how they responded to their lived experiences. And yet, in those instances, as individuals sharing the global community, they had very similar experiences. I have come to appreciate the importance and development of the grandmother-granddaughter dyad as a process that produces real and deep experiences, illustrating the power of the transcendental phenomenological approach that explicates the depth of participants’ stories. These experiences, as related, transformed and provided bright futures, transporting young women from childhood to adulthood in a most amazing manner.

The study provided significant evidence of how it might be possible to deliver successful outcomes from similar relationships. The symbiotic relationship provided the support needed by both grandmother and granddaughter. Additionally, I plan to implement some of the phenomenological methodology used as I work with groups within the academic and local community to give voice to others who have been “missing” or remained silent. I am grateful for the opportunity to carry out a study that is near and dear to my heart: to engage in research that reflects my passion and beliefs in supporting the welfare of young girls, while giving honor and recognition to older women who have magnanimously provided the means for transforming the lives of these girls into successful women.

Appendix

Appendix A: Textural Description

Phenomenology as a philosophical tradition, according to Patton (1990), asks: “What is the structure and essence of the experience of this phenomenon for these people?” (p. 69). In this study the phenomenon being studied is relationship in regards to leadership. From the themes and horizons I have developed a textural description. Using SC’s verbatim transcribed interview, I have developed an individual textural description of the experience of relationship. I selected this extrapolation because it provided imagery and insights into her grandmother’s care and protection of the grandchildren.

SC Verbatim Narrative: An Individual Textural Description

I have selected this textural description, a composite of SC’s narrative, to illustrate the leadership role and the value of relationships from the grandmother to granddaughter, and parent to child. This comprehensive textural description explores what was experienced by the participant (Moustakas 1994) and provides an image of the feelings, thoughts, and actions of the family members involved. It also represents a sample of the narratives. Through the verbatim notes, it will be evident that English is not the first language for SC. SC is an anthropologist, hence the very detailed and exhaustive shared information. I have kept to the script and present the raw data to enrich the synthesis. My comments are in bold typeface to enhance easy reference.

My grandma? The woman spend the whole her life to feel regretted that she never went, never went to school, but at the end, because of the time I spend with her and somehow now in retrospect, she was the most influence person in our childhood. She live with us. And there so their grandma is our grandma is pretty much is everybody’s else’s grand . . . vice versa. Sometimes you for, like the last time I told, told you my grandpa was the constantly hospitalized. When grandpa was not, when grandpa was hospitalized, grandma would be with, with uh, him and then after we came out of school and before my mom and dad come home, no one can even unlock the door and so we went to someone else house.

Grandma lived with SC, providing security. When she is absent, “no one to unlock the door” after school. An innocent child is at a loss with how to cope with the absence.

And there would be a lot of grandma there, right, and adopt us into their household and sometimes we ate there, had dinner and uh, and uh, doing the homework and sometimes you fell asleep you know in someone else’s house until your mom came home to rescue you. So that is the second, and that is the face of my grandma’s life, her job or she took upon herself is the nanny for all of the three of us, plus other kids in the neighborhood.

In the absence of grandma, the other grandmothers of the community would provide food and security to the child. Expressing a shared commitment to the welfare of the children.

So grandma was the one a very clever about there is a way children should have a snack in the summer time. Summer time is the summer time. Winter time is the winter time. Summer time she always have to make sure everything is chilled for us. . . . It’s a luxury. We will never have that that the food and the homemade this or that the sweet soup and put ice cube into it. Anyway, she always have a way to make sure that is right for the season and then the winter time, everything has to be warm and hot.

And the [inaudible] is home before we arrive home that make sure the sweet potato will still be hot, so she will put all the potatoes in the pack you know, under the comforter to keep them warm. So the winter time the happy time to go home because grandma’s said there’s something under the comforter, to go find it. That is for you, right, or that is something special and then of course she, she has all kinds of way you know for instance even tangerine, even in the winter time, she actually literally have to start a very, very small you know and uh, we would call equivalent you know what the barbecue fire. And the warm up the orange. Yeah. And she can manage actually without a burn, burn the orange peel but bring the orange to the right temperature. Of course I can guarantee you that uh, uh, heated orange, the tangerine didn’t really tastes good, but she insists that’s the healthy way to have it. So pretty much everything she did, now in retrospect, there’s always uh, some form of what we would call the folklore knowledge involved and uh, then that uh, folk knowledge now of course. After school you go home, grandma will be there. If grandma is there, it means the snack is ready. Right? And the house will have the lights on. Yeah, it’s welcoming, although she will say, “Okay wash your hand, find your snack and then next thing, go to do your homework.” She will supervise you and that is the whole set of a sense of security.

Grandma exhibited leadership qualities in preparing and providing for the children based on the season of the year. She was perceptive to the needs of the small children, providing healthy snacks after school. “The light would be on,” noted SC, thus providing a

sense of security. The need for food and security are recurring themes, which are basic human needs. They provide for children love, value, and acceptance.

When sometimes once I got older, my mom would leave the key to me or told me to go to the neighbors' house to gather the key and unlock the door, walk in, there's nothing. I waited for wait you there, therefore there's no food. You're hungry, you're tired but no, you don't know when you're going to have dinner and uh, etcetera, so basically it's just she has, in retrospect, just embodied that whole sense of security and the stability in our life and probably that's something my mom usually will always say is probably it's that's the role of the grandma, the actual nanny you know, was probably the happiest time in her life as well. Yeah. And although she claiming that she couldn't do too much.

In contrast, mother did not provide the snacks nor sense of security in her absence.

SC noted "there is no food . . . you are hungry." SC experienced fear and hunger.

But we keep her busy and give her life uh, uh, uh, otherwise she pretty much spent her whole her life worry about the health of her husband and the fighting with her [inaudible] and the daughter, that's my mom. Yeah, that the part I always needed to help her with this and still so yeah, actually that's was the memory of that ghost money, those ancestry worship ritual I have to help her out was later on was the first time I start to make a connection of eventually the discipline I'll choose for myself.

SC noted, "But we keep her busy and give her life." This strong statement, while not entirely true, perhaps helped SC to "give back" something to the person who had given so much to her and her siblings. Again, this reflected the need for security and acceptance.

How that connected to something long time ago, I really completely forgot. Yeah. And uh, basically uh, I think I told you, she just had uh, such it's really her own way. Who knows is that ritual she adopted from somewhere else or is just her interpretation of what's the proper way to do it and uh, the ghost money for the supposedly deceased parents and the relatives who actually, other than her dream, there's no way to even confirm it.

The only evidence she had is actually her own dream. Whether she take those, she took those dreams very uh, very, very seriously to the degree not only you know for the spender occasion of festivity and based on the holiday because the holiday calendar, right, the you live and the memorial day of course she needed to come out with the offering and the ritual and the other than that, it's a periodically she woke up in the morning early doing [inaudible].

So we go every day basically uh, like West Union, okay, and we wire some cash to them and then basically then her task will be preparing the proper food and then if she decided

at this time the best I offer or my parents they are really needed in the others, in the other world is the cash and I will be the one to send it to go to those uh, ritual supply store, to gather those ghost money. There are times occasionally and uh, I will buy some U.S. dollars as well (laughs) yeah and then anyway that's my job, gather the incense and gather the ghost money and doing, as I told you, she was very particular about it. Always have to make sure all of the offerings you know in one circle is open, one circle is not open. The one that is open are the one is the charity donation for everybody and uh, her logic is since there so many lingering souls over there, maybe they are my mother have the family linger and their need and so if they see the money, I want to give to my parents, they will come over. She needed extra to charity donation. That's why there's the full circle and the half circle is open on it and so I was the helper for all of these her ritual practice which, at the time, in the family no one really care.

The unexplainable. The mysteries and complexities of religion and dogma.

Grandma herself was holding on to her relationship with her parents . . . even though they were dead. The rituals provide a sense of connection, comfort, and caring for the deceased. Her dreams were her connection to the past and hope for future interactions based on the tenets of her religion.

And the rung of life and the rung of the death in the home are connected, all these classic issues for anthropologists. Or it all started with grandma.

The metaphors used by SC, “rung of life” and “rung of death,” draw on imageries that help to further explain the complexities of fully understanding the cyclical nature of life and death and how each culture and religion experience them.

Usually we'll assume the daughter will be influenced by the mother. And she turned out now you know in retrospect realize no, actually the way the way the I turned out, how achieved I don't know okay, but (laughs) the way who I am now is more from grandma than from my mom. Why I say that? Because my mom she was so very unusual for that generation of women and she was adopted by the only child so my grandpa sent her to college.

An Individual Structural Description

I created a structural description during this phase of the study. According to Moustakas (1994) a structural description asks how the phenomenon was experienced. The experience is unwrapped through reflection, imagery, and looking for worthwhile meanings from different

perspectives. Different perspectives and stories use methods such as languages, voices, and metaphors, icons, images, rituals, observations, and reflections, verbal and nonverbal. Food, religion, music, smells, poetry, literature, and various forms of expressions were employed to interpret the participants' narratives. In this individual structural description, I drew on the narratives of MMG, the youngest participant, with a vivid memory. The structures reveal how MMG experienced her grandmother's leadership qualities. MMG was adopted by her grandmother whose home and family life had provided structure, love, guidance, and protection. This structural description reveals words and themes used in the narrative to show how love, loss of love and a relationship, commitment, different voices, and food were central to the grandmother-granddaughter relationship. MMG's grandmother and grandfather were separated by the time she was 10 years old. She noted how the separation affected the grandmother-granddaughter relationship:

Once he and my grandmother got separated it was really just like her and I like, we were like two road dogs, so whether it was going to church together or after church, going to the Dollar Store or like whatever, it was all for good . . . between the ages of 10, 11, 12, all the way up until um, I want to say 15 to 16, it was her and I like together.

Home and family relationships took on a different structure and feeling. MMG now had her grandmother to herself. Their relationship became more intense with MMG providing companionship to her grandmother, and the grandmother providing leadership/mentorship and enjoyable activities for MMG, without having to accommodate to the needs of a spouse. Childhood can be an ideally halcyon state for a child, and MMG knew how to value the experiences. She noted,

So every summer I would go to school with her and help her clean or just like spend time with her and so that was like you know our thing, everything was our thing if we were together because we're always together because she was clingy like that.

In the presence of food: buying, preparing, smelling, sharing, eating, and enjoying were “how” the relationship developed. MMG again noted, “and so we would go get one for like lunch and we would just sit down and eat or whatever but that was like our thing to do whenever she took me to school with her.”

The grandmother’s commitment is heard in this voice:

And she worked in the same school up until the time she retired in order to be a full-time parent to my two little cousins because she was much older than she was when she took me, um, she needed to devote more time to them. So she retired early in order to stay at home with my cousin.

And as an example of learning through observation and passing on of values, MMG stated,

She always led by helping others. Um, and I think that was very telling around Christmas time every year because she was a custodian um at a public school system. She had more gifts under the tree than we did as children because everybody appreciated and trusted . . . so as she came into your office and clean. One, your desk would be immaculate but two, everything that was there was still there and if she could ever help anyone, she would.

Structural description is valuable in providing more details and depth as each participant’s narrative unfolds.

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